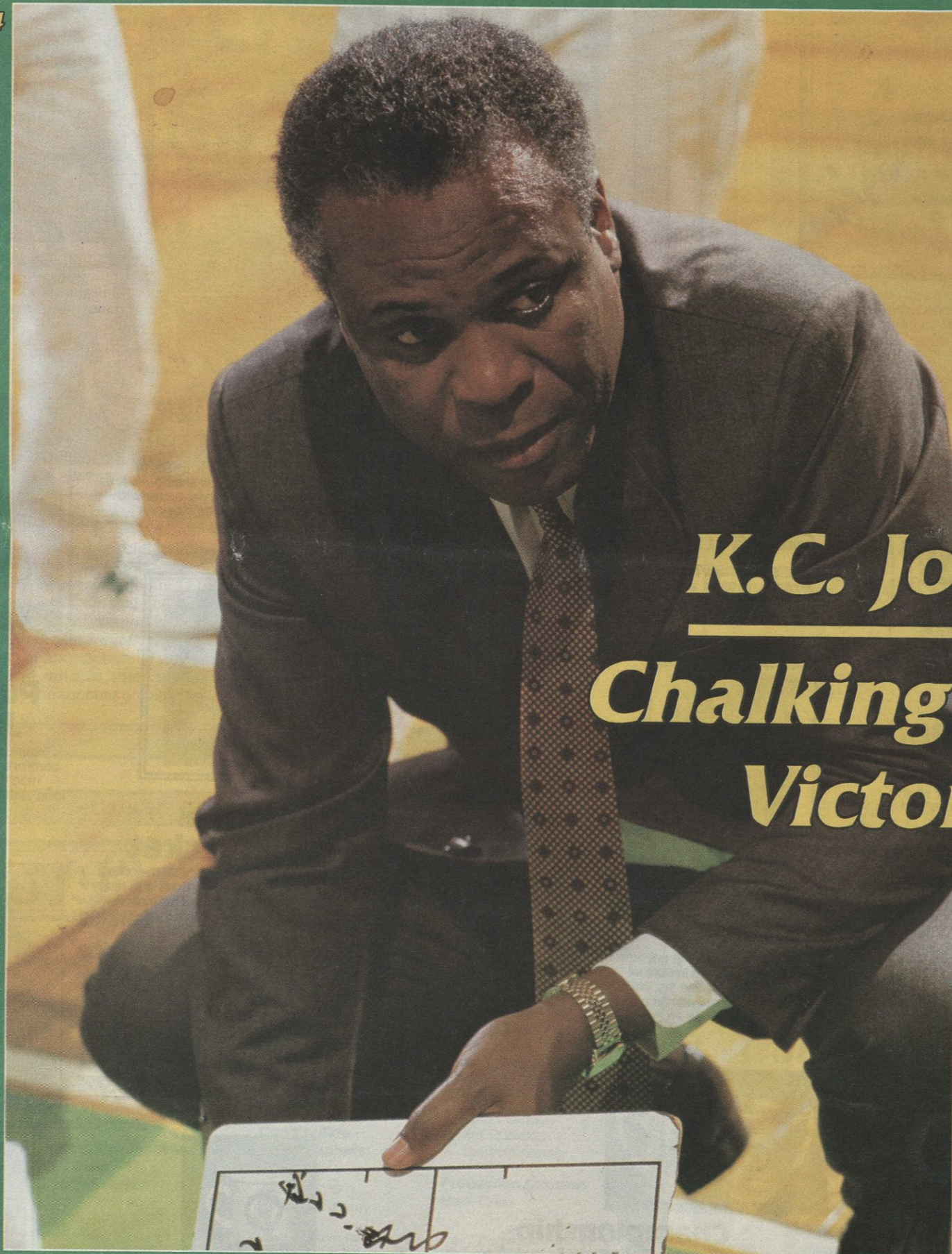


BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE



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May 24, 1988
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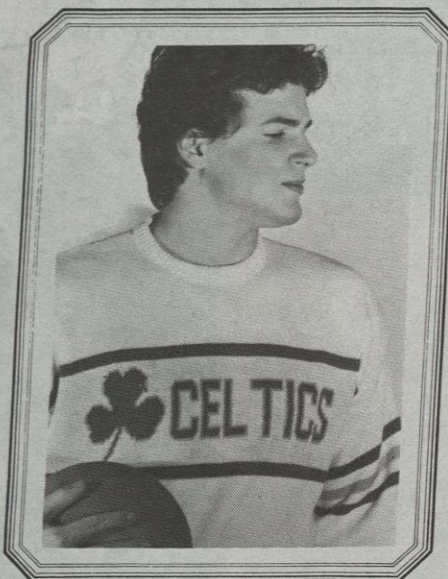
K.C. Jones
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Victories***



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BOSTON CELTICS PRIDE

Minniefield Recipient of Sports Channel's "Celtics 6th Star Award"



Mitchell Freund Presents Dirk Minniefield with his Award

Sportschannel New England, the exclusive television outlet for Boston Celtics home games, made a special halftime presentation at the final regular-season home game of the 1987-88 season, the April 21st tilt against the Chicago Bulls. On that occasion, guard Dirk Minniefield was presented with the first annual "Celtics Sixth Star Award"; Dirk was selected in a balloting of Sportschannel viewers as the Celtics reserve who in their opinion contributed the most to the success of this year's

team.

In addition to the trophy presented to Minniefield, Sportschannel made a \$1,000 donation in his name to the "Make-A-Wish" foundation of Greater Boston, a charity which is dedicated to fulfilling the wishes of children who are afflicted with life-threatening illnesses.

In the photo above, Mitchell Freund, the Vice-President and General Manager of Sportschannel, presents this year's Sixth Star Award to Number 11, Dirk Minniefield.

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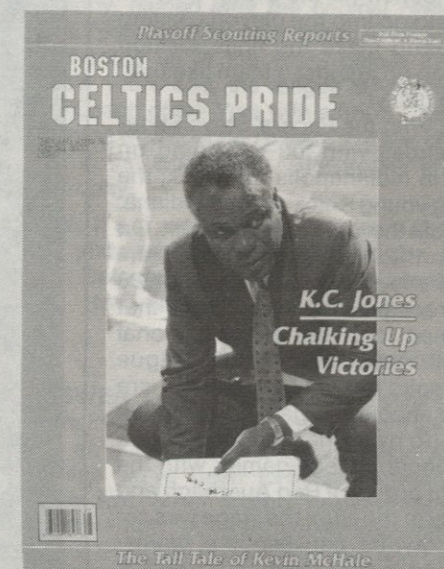
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VOLUME 3, ISSUE 14
NUMBER 54
MAY 24, 1988

Cover . . .

Year after year K.C. Jones has accepted the challenge many coaches only dream of . . . keeping a great team great. Cover photography by Steve Lipofsky.



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Children from Greenhaven Elementary School in Kevin's hometown of Hibbing, Minnesota, came together recently to pay tribute to their local hero.

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Dick Vitale, college basketball analyst extraordinaire, kindly spent a few moments with writer Bob Schron to look at the likely 1st round picks in Draft '88

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MAY 24, 1988

Celtics Face Knicks in First Round Action Start Your Engines

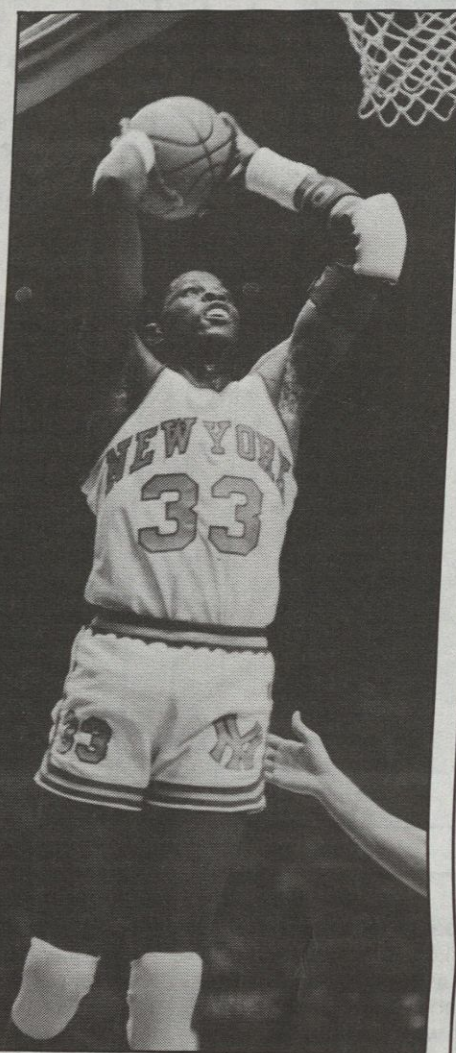
By Bob Schron

Bob Ryan, the veteran scribe of *The Boston Globe*, was completing an interview about the college draft for this publication last week. As he was finishing up, he walked down the sideline at Hellenic College and looked out at the Celtics — Dennis Johnson, Robert Parish, Larry Bird, Kevin McHale, Danny Ainge, et al. — and concluded, "Can you imagine? A good young team like the Knicks with a lottery selection (in the draft). Why do they want to go into the playoffs, killing themselves to make the final position and then go up against a team like that. They'd be crazy!"

History. With the Pacers' Steve Stipanovich's airball with '00 remaining on the clock in Indianapolis last week, the staggering young Knicks edged Indiana, 88-86 to gain the last spot in the East. On Friday, April 29th, Boston hosted the Knicks in the first game of the 1988 Playoffs, resuming a playoff rivalry that has spanned four eras of the National Basketball Association. The league needed a solid base in Madison Square Garden to enable it to gain credibility in the fifties (to rival what had then been a much stronger college game); with the concurrent arrival of Red Auerbach and Bob Cousy in the Hub, the stage was set for four playoffs between the teams, commencing in 1951 (New York swept a 3-game series, 83-69 & 92-78). The Celtics would gain a measure of revenge in the pre-Russell years in 1955, winning two of three. In the late sixties, the Knicks and Celtics collided in Bill Russell's final season, the meeting of the veteran Celtics' dynasty and the Willie Reed Knicks. Boston won that 1969 series, but obviously the Knicks were the team of the future. In the seventies, New York and Boston were the teams featuring players like Walt Frazier and Dave Cowens. Each team won championships, New York in 1973 and the Celtics the following year.

This will be the second meeting of the eighties, with the Celtics winning in seven games in 1984. Much of the Celtic cast remains the same. Only Bill Cartwright and Louis Orr, the latter a seldom-used reserve, remain for NY.

1987-88. Boston won the season series, 5-1, but ironically, Rick Pitino's rebuilding program took some necessary confidence away from the teams' meetings. For example, the teams met at Boston Garden, November 18, with Boston at



Patrick Ewing: Best Year

6-1 and New York at 1-5. New York dominated Boston early as the Celts played minus Bird and McHale. At half-time, after Boston set a league record by shooting 0-19 from the floor, New York led, 61-36. But the Celtics battled back to win in double overtime, 111-109 as Danny Ainge connected on six 3-point FGs. The exiled Darren Daye's tip won it. The Knicks' pressing game — which K.C. Jones regards as one of the best in basketball — took its only win in MSG, on January 9, 106-98. Later in the season, on February 22, with New York battling to salvage an up-and-down season, the Knicks nearly defeated Boston in Hartford, leading 14-3 after the tap, and after

the Celtics regained control New York nearly caught the veterans, 95-93.

The Experience Factor. Patrick Ewing called the final regular season game against the Pacers, "the most important game of my life." But the Celtics have played in eight straight playoffs, going to the Conference finals every year but 1982-83. The starters have played in a combined 626 playoff contests, averaging 90 ppg combined. The Knicks' starters, including Ewing, incumbent Rookie-of-the-Year point Mark Jackson, Sidney Green, Kenny Walker and Gerald Wilkens, were playing in their first post-season action as a unit (Green has had limited playoff experience). Cartwright is a veteran performer, but the Celtics' edge here is off-the-board, it's so extensive. "When we played our first playoffs against Philadelphia," recalls Bird of a 4-1 Julius Erving-led wipeout, "we were completely outclassed. Nothing, but nothing takes the place of experience in the playoffs."

Playing Style. "Pitino has done a fine job with that team," says Jones. "Look at the record — they were a last-place team with little confidence coming into the season. Now they believe it themselves." The Knicks played effectively during the second half of the season because of four things. "On offense," says assistant coach Chris Ford, "You can't say enough about Jackson (3rd in NBA in Assists at 10.6 assists). "He ran the show as a rookie and he's the man they look to in their offense. He's always handling it." The Jackson factor, and the improved offense by center Ewing (20 ppg) keyed this offense, especially Ewing's scoring in the final fifteen games of the year. The others keys led to the Knicks' entrance into the select circle. Their press, which is a 2-2-1 and 1-2-2, is effective because they hustle. And fourth, their effectiveness at home. In the second half of the season, only Boston, Washington and the Bullets won in MSG. "We'll make no

changes. We'll just work on our game and keep improving," says Jones. The Celtics' game — strong inside game of McHale and Parish, the all-around brilliance of Bird, and a tremendous cohesiveness on offense of late — opponents couldn't say enough about the Celts' blending of Ainge's 3-point proficiency and the inside game. Defensively, the Celtics are switching less than in previous years.

Key Matchups. New York will try and neutralize the Parish-McHale tandem with Cartwright subbing frequently and pairing with Ewing. Boston will likely play the quick Ainge on Jackson, another key to this set. Who will stop the 30 ppg Bird? Not Green or Walker certainly; Bird had 41 vs. this group in January and moved into second place in Cs history with 36 in Hartford. Off the bench, the Celtics should prevail: Minniefield, Paxson and Acres keyed a critical March 26th win, the night after Boston dissipated a thirty-point lead over Philadelphia, which was left out of the party this season. In the pivot: Parish against Ewing.

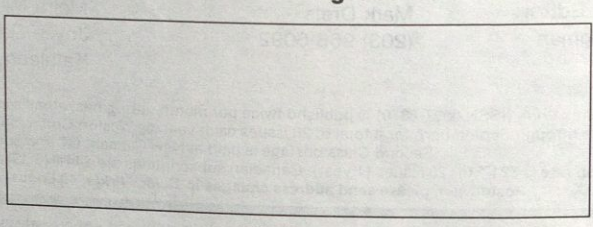
Relevant Stats. Bird's 30 ppg are almost assured here, providing his sprained ankle is completely healed. The Knicks' defense forced a league-high 1577 turnovers going into the final week of the regular season. The Celts' offense led in all three major offensive categories, including field goal percentage, free throw percentage and 3-point proficiency. Boston was 36-5 at home, 21-21 on the road. New York was 30-11 at home and 9-32 away from MSG. Bird and McHale are likely NBA All-Stars, with Jackson the likely Rookie of the Year candidate. The Knicks also love the three point field goal; Pitino brought Providence The Final Four with the shot last year and they were second to the Celts in 3-point tries, (170-535). Boston was 265-685. Bird (30.0) and McHale (22.9) lead Boston's scoring and Ewing (20.0) and Wilkens (17.3) lead New York. Jackson had 211 steals for New York, one of select few rookies to crack that two hundred threshold.

Attention Celtics Pride Subscribers

Due to an increase in both printing prices and postage rates, the annual subscription rate to *Boston Celtics Pride* will rise to \$30.00, effective July 15, 1988. (Newsstand rates will rise to \$3.00 per issue.) Subscribers currently on our mailing list who would like to add another year to their existing subscriptions at the current \$24.00 rate are welcome to do so, by attaching their mailing label (found on the front cover) to the coupon below and returning to us postmarked no later than **July 15, 1988**. Checks and money orders are to be made out to *Celtics Pride* and enclosed with this coupon in the amount of \$24.00.

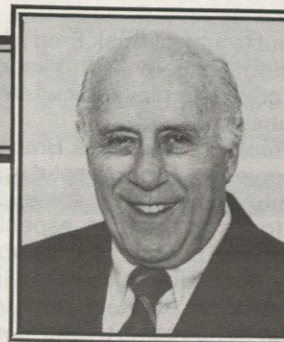
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ASK RED



By Red Auerbach

EDITORS NOTE: "Ask Red Auerbach" is a regular feature of *Celtics Pride*. If you have a question for Red, please send it to *Celtics Pride*, 49 Locust Avenue, New Canaan, Connecticut 06840. Red will answer as many as possible in each issue.

QUESTION: During the past two summers, I have gone to the Robert Parish All-Star Basketball Camp. I really enjoyed learning about Robert and the team and also I learned a lot. I was wondering about other camps held by past and present Celtics. I want to know if you know of any, and if so where and when do they occur.

Stephanie Birkitt, Plymouth, NH

RED'S ANSWER: Your question, or some similar version of it, has been probably the single most asked question of this column in the past few months. Obviously, around this time of year people start working on their summer plans, and I'm glad to see that some of those include some of the many basketball camps held in the New England area and featuring past and present Celtics. I was happy to hear that you enjoyed Robert's camp and got a chance to meet him personally; his demeanor on the court, sort of stern and serious, is not at all what he's really like as a person. The Robert Parish All-Star Basketball Camp will be held this summer at New Hampshire College from July 17-22 and from July 24-29. But there are quite a few other camps also taking place this summer. First and foremost, a funny-looking guy named Red will be hosting the 28th annual Red Auerbach Basketball School from July 31st to August 5th at Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass. My basketball school, I'm proud to say, is the longest-running such school in the world. Other camps include the All-Pro Basketball School with K.C. Jones and Jerry Sichting, the 16th annual Dave Cowens Basketball School, the 1st annual Kevin McHale Basketball Day Camp, the 20th annual Don Nelson-Tom Sanders Basketball School, and the 2nd annual Pro Basketball Legends Camp. All in all, there is a great variety of location and types of camps; even if our readers don't go to mine — and they really should — I know that all of these camps provide both a good time and a good education in basketball. In order to satisfy all of you who are interested in basketball camps, we have included a complete listing of Celtics-related camps elsewhere in this issue.

QUESTION: How many players could the Celtics lose to the expansion drafts in the next two years? Will the expansion drafts be held before or after the NBA draft?

Matthew Thompson, St. Albans, W. Va.

RED'S ANSWER: The most we, or any NBA team, can lose in the expansion draft is one player per year. Here is the way it works. Every team in the league can protect eight players from their present roster, including the injured list. As soon as one unprotected player is selected by either expansion team, the balance of each team's roster is frozen. Therefore, we will definitely lose one player each year to expansion, but we can't lose more than that. As for the second part of your question, here are a bunch of dates pertinent to the expansion and regular drafts and the lottery. The fourth NBA Draft Lottery will be held Saturday, May 21st in New York at the American Museum of Natural History. The Lottery, which determines the order of selection for the first seven picks in the NBA Draft will be held at halftime of a CBS broadcast of the NBA playoffs. The expansion draft coin flip between Charlotte and Miami, the first two expansion teams to enter

however, are on our team, since they have established themselves as stars in the league. Most of the rest of the players simply wear a given shoe in exchange for the company providing them free of charge.

QUESTION: There is the Heisman Trophy in college football and the Cy Young award in baseball. Do you think there will ever be an award or trophy named after an NBA player?

Paul S. Cote, So. Portland, Me.

RED'S ANSWER: Honestly, I don't have any idea about what the league's plans are for making any changes in the naming of any of their annual awards. Although none of the awards are presently named after players, several do bear the names of some of the league's founders or prominent executives. The Most Valuable Player award is the Maurice Podoloff Trophy, named after the NBA's first Commissioner. The Rookie of the Year Award is the Eddie Gottlieb Trophy, named after the original owner of the Philadelphia 76ers, who was also the man who made the league's schedule up in the years before computers. Finally, a few years ago, the league office decided to present the Coach of the Year with a trophy named after an old warhorse who coached a team to a few championships back in the Dark Ages. That trophy is the Red Auerbach Trophy.

QUESTION: It's a well-known fact that the Celtics have won sixteen championships in the league's forty years. Being runner-up is also no small accomplishment. How many times have they finished second?

John Bowes, Brockton, Mass.

RED'S ANSWER: I know that to some finishing second might be considered a pretty fair showing, but we've never regarded it as acceptable here. In addition to the 16 championships we've been fortunate enough to win, we've made two other losing appearances in the Championship Finals. In 1958, we were defeated in six games by the St. Louis Hawks, who we had beaten the previous year. Then, after 14 consecutive winning trips to the finals, we were defeated by the Los Angeles Lakers in 1985 in six games, after also having taken them for the championship the previous year.

1988 NBA Playoffs

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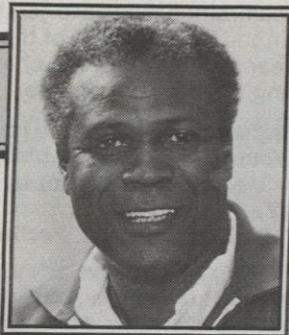
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**CATCH ALL THE ACTION ON
WLVI 56**

The Celtics' Home Away From Home!



By K.C. Jones

The Personnel

We headed into the final week of the season in reasonably good shape; I think with our ballclub, there isn't satisfaction unless you win everything possible. In the regular season that means, of course, finishing first in the entire NBA. The personnel on the team this season has undergone a major reshaping. We brought in a pair of dynamite young front court players, Mark Acres and Brad Lohaus, at the beginning of the season, and promising first round draft choice Reggie Lewis. Over time, the entire look of the second team changed, and honestly, a fine-tuned assimilation is difficult to achieve over the course of a season. We built a fine near-sixty victory season out of it all, and by continuing to work at our game from Day One of this season, we still put pressure on the Lakers for the best record in the NBA. Now they're suffering some injuries (Magic Johnson, James Worthy, Michael Cooper, A.C. Green) and now they understand just how crippling physical injuries can be to your team's confidence. We had a very similar situation last year. We know what that's all about.

A capsule review of our personnel of the past year follows.

Danny Ainge. In a number of ways, Danny was our most consistent performer this year. We have always known just how good he is — around the league coaches talk about him with the same respect the other All-Stars receive. His end-to-end game has held our defense together this season, one of the key factors in that label "most consistent." He is averaging a career high in points (15.5 ppg) and his three-point range has added a weapon to the offense.

Dennis Johnson. Dennis had a struggle earlier this season, according to a story-writer in this magazine last month. I don't know — Dennis carries the offensive/defensive burden of this team in a way that few others can. He's the floor general on offense, and the players look to him for setting the tempo every time up the floor. We led the league in assists this season, and I have to think this is attributable to Dennis' very giving attitude on the court. Defensively, the Jordans, Drexlers, Jeff Malones, etc., still are in DJ's territory. I think he's had a fine season.

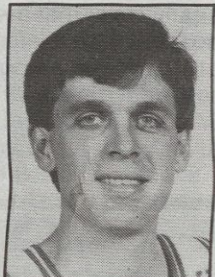
Robert Parish. I do look at our game from a defensive perspective most of the time. When I look at tapes of our games and watch the defensive rotations, I know there's a difference when Robert is in the game and when he's out of it. Teams will challenge us when Robert's not there. When he's on the floor, we have an unsurmountable skyscraper going for us. Robert will need help on the boards during the playoffs; we've been hurt

repeatedly this year by teams getting second and third shots at our basket. (We've been better recently, but when there's a lapse — for example, against Washington in Landover, April 17, we usually lose.) The burden of proof in this situation might appear to fall upon Robert, but it's not the case. Robert Parish is a helper on the defensive end. If a player beats his man defensively, Parish will pick up. That's how we've been hurt most often. Averaging ten shots a game, Robert nevertheless goes out every night and plays hard.

Larry Bird. Larry's our superstar; it's been said many different ways — and I can't compliment the man enough — with phenomenal talent, he still outworks everybody and he's a leader. Larry set the pace for us this year, coming in in great shape, winning the second game of the season with a buzzer-beater and 47 points, making over fifty straight free throws twice this year. And on and on. Still running all-out for loose balls and diving for them. Larry's averaging a career-high 30.0 ppg this year, but as a coach I look for the intangibles, and as always, he's at a career-high there too.



Danny Ainge



Kevin McHale

Kevin McHale. Kevin's return to the lineup in late November ironically sent us into a brief tailspin (our offense had become guard-oriented), but we all know that he is an indispensable facet of this team. I thought he took some undeserved heavy criticism during the West Coast trip; my view of Kevin is based on three major premises. First, he's a winner and he loves to play. Second, he always becomes even more deeply committed to the team goals as the season reaches its climax. And third, he's a scorer with a scorer's mentality. His presence and desire in the low post (and defensively, too) are indispensable to the success of this team in June.

Dirk Minniefeld and Jim Paxson. I think the team began changing much for the better when we added Dirk in December. His aggressive attitude offensively and his willingness to mix defensively added strength to this team. I think his back-to-back efforts as a starter against Michael Jordan and Isiah Thomas (we won both games) in January really helped keep us afloat while we were still struggling to find cohesion. We traded for Jim Paxson in February and he immediately paid dividends, winning games in New Jersey and contributing mightily in other wins against New York, Philadelphia and Dallas. Our general manager Jan Volk worked hard to make this deal, and for the right reasons: we needed a big guard, and we needed a player with playoff experience. I just feel good about bringing Minniefeld and Paxson into the game and I suspect the

starters feel the same way. They know they can play all-out and feel good that they can get a blow if needed.

Artis Gilmore. The A-Train. Artis has helped this team in several ways. The veterans immediately respected him and were of one voice in telling us to get him. He was a positive force in wins over Portland and the Clippers (the latter an important one when we blew the home court game to New Jersey the previous night). He has gotten himself into fine shape now, and he's going to help in the playoffs.

Fred Roberts. I think the team has been helped considerably this year by Fred's ability to play better off the bench. He's aggressive and a fighter, and he helped in road wins over Indiana and Portland, as well as a big home court effort against the Rockets, the latter when we were in

deep foul trouble. I think Fred's learned the Eastern Conference this year, and is a more confident player for us. We know more what to expect.

The Rookies. Mark Acres, Brad Lohaus and Reggie Lewis form a solid future for this club. Mark added some positive things for us this season, especially on the offensive boards and his ability to run the floor. Brad Lohaus helped us considerably on the West Coast trip, and although he has some things to work on in the low post area over the summer, I'm pleased by what we've seen from him. Reggie Lewis is a player; I think he can come back next season and be an active contributor. I think rookies can be active by watching and learning in their first season, and by working as hard as they possibly can in practice, developing excellent habits. That's where rookies earn playing time.

As of this writing, we still haven't reached a final decision on Bill Walton. We all respect Bill here; his efforts to make it back this season, a full six months ahead of schedule, is another tribute to his courage, from this corner.

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GOOD FOOD, GOOD TIMES, GOOD SPORTS

NOTES AND QUOTES

By Jim Rucidlo

An Evening with Bill Laimbeer

Reporter 1: Bill, why can't you win here at Boston Garden?

Laimbeer: We haven't come out and played consistently for 48 minutes and the Celtics get a lot of breaks in this building.

Reporter 2: Bill, exactly what breaks do the Celtics get in this building?

Laimbeer: Are you from Boston?

Reporter 2: No.

Laimbeer: Do you write for Boston?

Reporter 2: Well, yes.

Laimbeer: Well, then you should know the answer to that question.

□ □ □

It's the time of the year when seven teams are, as Buck Williams put it, getting ready to put their uniforms in mothballs, while the other 16 teams are preparing for the second season — the playoffs. It's also the time when the writers are taking a final look at this year's MVP candidates.

Larry Bird, Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson are way in front of the pack as the finish line nears. In the Celtics final home game of the season, Bird and Jordan each offered a summation of the things they've done best all season long. Bird: 44 points, 10 rebounds, 3 assists. Jordan: 39 points, 3 rebounds, 8 assists. Celtics 126, Bulls 119. Here is what the principals and some of their supporting casts said following the game:

Jordan: "This was not a game between Larry and myself; it's a game between the Celtics and the Bulls. We're just trying to be the leaders of our teams. It's always great to be in a race with Larry for such a prestigious award. I'm not saying I don't want to win it. I'd love to win it. I was disappointed last year when I didn't win it and I'd be disappointed this year, but that won't stop me from playing as well as I can. I think my play this year was better than last year."

□ □ □

Bird: "I already have a couple under my belt. I could care less about winning another. Michael had a good year, let him win one."

□ □ □

Doug Collins: "Larry Bird is a great, great player, but I think Michael Jordan had an MVP year. Last year the knock on him was we didn't win enough games. This year we've already won 49. Michael never plays 1 on 1, he's always going 1 on 2 or 1 on 3. How about when he draws three men to him and then finds the open man?"

□ □ □

K.C. Jones: "I don't think there's a question in my mind who my MVP is — it's Larry. Michael Jordan does a lot of things for his team, but Larry does all the same things, and Larry's always given us the leadership. To my way of thinking, there's none better. What you saw tonight between the two players (Bird and Jordan) was vintage Larry."

□ □ □

Sam Vincent: "I've been fortunate to have the opportunity to play with two of the best players in the league. Larry and Mike have totally contrasting styles, but both are totally effective."

"When you make a pass to Mike, you watch something exciting and fantastic. When you pass to Larry, you watch something exciting and fantastic, but in a different way. Larry works at it hard, and for Mike it just happens."

"Mike is a 1 on 1 type of player who needs to get the ball and needs to get into a groove. Whenever you have Michael Jordan on your team, all you need is a pretty good supporting cast, because he can beat you all by himself."

□ □ □

Kevin McHale: "Michael Jordan had a great year. His team got off to a great start, but then they sort of slumped in the middle of the year."

"Larry played with a team that had injury problems early in the year and still did very well. Last summer Larry spent his time working out and getting himself into great shape. I think he deserves the MVP."

□ □ □

Kevin McHale, informed after the game that Danny Ainge hadn't taken a shot in the first half that ended Boston 61, Detroit 47: "No wonder we had such a big lead."

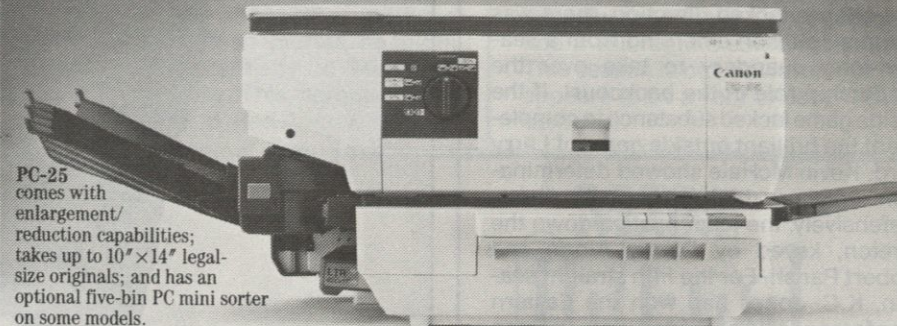
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Doug Collins thinks very highly of ex-Celtic Sam Vincent, who is averaging 12.9 points and 8.5 assists since joining the Bulls 26 games ago. "Sam's done very well for us. He pushes the ball up the court consistently. I think we're 17-7 since Sam's been starting for us."

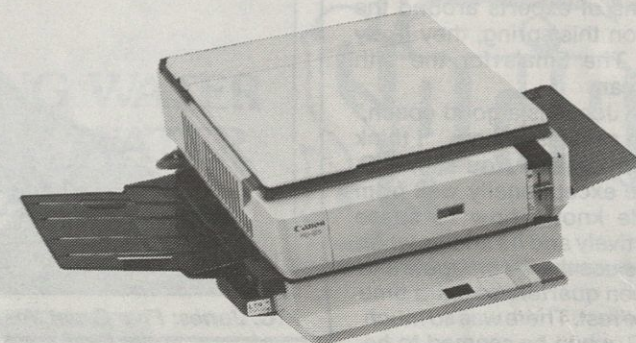
Responded Vincent, "Chicago is far more suited to my style of playing. The Bulls play total transition basketball; we're a young team, and we run at every chance. I'm finally getting a chance to show what I can do, and I'm getting playing time and experience."

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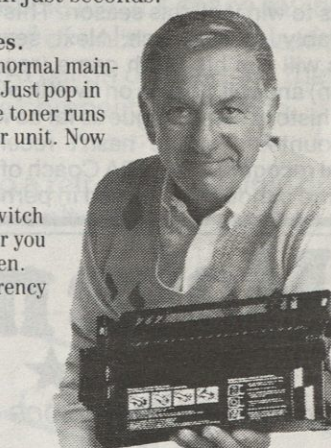
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K.C. Jones Heads the Celtics' Campaign

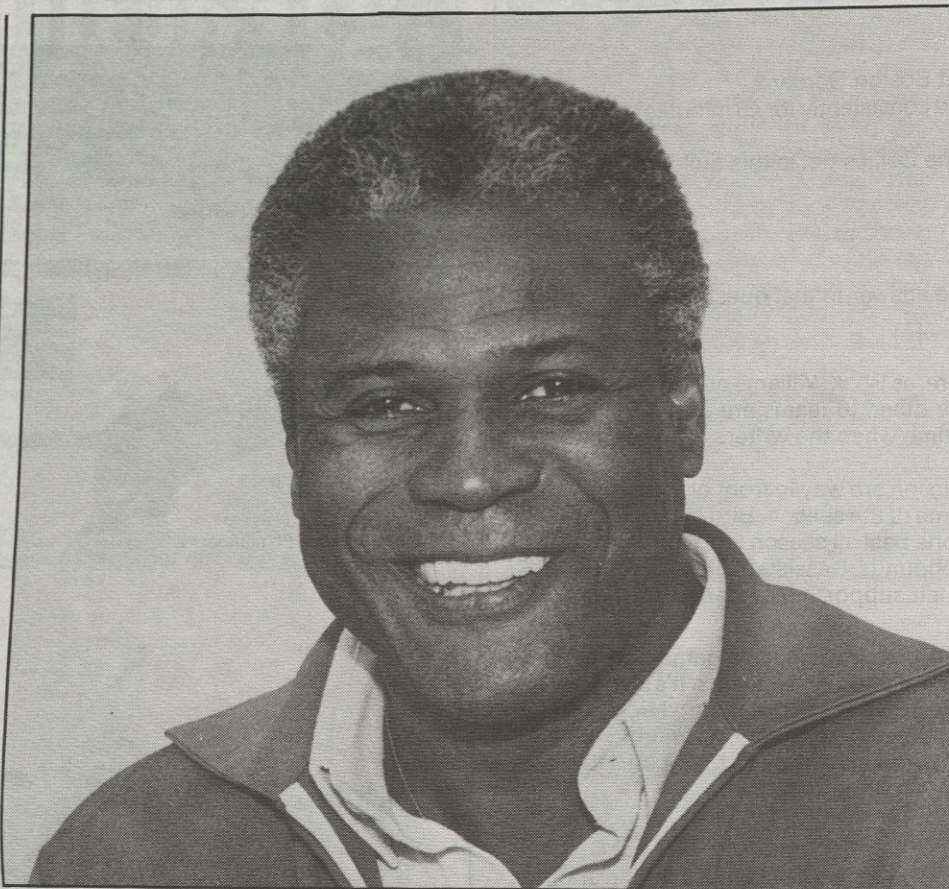
The Floor General

Moments after the Celtics defeated the Detroit Pistons, 121-110, to clinch the 1987-88 Eastern Conference regular season championship, there was a feeling of satisfaction, accomplishment and joy in the Celtics' dressing room. After a year that began with injury and inconsistency, Boston again united forces to play extremely well down the stretch. When the offense lacked direction, there was Dennis Johnson emerging from a season-long quandary to take over the leadership role in the backcourt. If the inside game lacked substance to complement the brilliant outside game of Larry Bird, Kevin McHale showed determination to score high-percentage shots. Defensively, the team hustled down the stretch, keyed by Danny Ainge and Robert Parish. For the fifth straight season, K.C. Jones had won the Eastern Conference title and if one were to listen to the opinions of experts around the game in Boston this spring, they likely are to reach The Finals for the fifth consecutive year.

"I think K.C. Jones is a good coach," Red Auerbach said last month. "I think he's a real good coach. You see, K.C. runs the game exceptionally well from the bench. He knows how to space timeouts effectively and he knows when to substitute, to use the TV timeouts and the time between quarters as extra time for his players to rest. There was so much criticism of K.C. when he seemed to be playing the starters so many minutes, but you didn't hear them complaining. That's because K.C. was using all of the resources at his control."

"The other quality about K.C. is that he has the players' respect. They listen to him. I've always said that is the key to success in coaching. That, and the ability to adjust to the changes in the game."

K.C. Jones has moved into first place in the historic Celtics' coaching ranks in winning percentage this season. In his almost five seasons at the helm, he has won 309 regular season games and heading into this season, his lowest victory total was 59, which came last year. Jones' Celtics teams have won two NBA titles and are co-favorites with the Lakers to win it all this season. This is a certifiably great coach. Next season Jones will win his 500th game (regular season) and will close in on twelfth place in the history of the league as far as wins are counted. Yet, he hasn't received official recognition as NBA Coach of the Year and although he turned in perhaps



K.C. Jones: Five Great Years

his best coaching job this year, he likely won't win it again this season.

"It's their (the players') show," he responds when asked if this slight bothers him. "I don't know — I think your ability as coach is measured by the success of your team. We've been to The Finals every year I've been here as coach. I think that says something."

Jones' coaching history has been well chronicled in this magazine. He worked his way up through the conventional ranks — head coach at Brandeis, and then on to an assistant position in 1971-72 under Bill Sharman, his former teammate with the Celtics. Jones then coached in the American Basketball Association for a season before finally landing a head coaching job with the Washington Bullets in 1973. K.C. has assumed the role of a fighter throughout his career; he had to fight to make it as a defensive specialist when a player. He had to fight to win acceptance as a black head coach in the NBA, especially after he was fired from the Bullets' job because they had lost in

the playoffs for two straight seasons (1975 and 1976). If it was difficult to attain his first position, it was exceptionally hard to be hired again. This, for a man who turned in a 155-91 record over four seasons.

The Celtics this season are an accurate portrayal of all of this great coach's qualities. Patiently, he allowed this team's veteran talents to reemerge, albeit in a slightly altered form. With McHale out at the beginning of the season, he encouraged Ainge's ability from long range to form a more functional part of the team's offensive game plan. But when this success seemingly backfired and the team seemed to lose its identity on two separate occasions, Jones worked the players hard. First on the practice floor in December and then later, when the legs were weary in March, at the chalkboard. There has been a tendency, unfortunately, to regard this superior man as exclusively a "players' coach" and it's a mistake. Jones is a master technician, always shifting his approach to win games and fit his players. Is there anyone who has mastered the NBA zone defense rule better than the Celtics, who have used the isolation technique with Bird better than any other team in the league? Defensively, Jones has overseen a switching zone-man technique which has successfully combined the trend of double-teaming on defense with the best man-to-man techniques in his coaching repertoire.

"I think I go by what I see out there," Jones says in a question about matchups. "It's something you have to be constantly adjusting to; for example, if the other team is using a quicker lineup, I'll want to use Mark Acres, rather than Artis Gilmore. I'm very amenable to using my bench — when they are playing well. I think the addition of Dirk Minniefield,

Jim Paxson and Gilmore has helped us immensely. The starters can go out and play hard and not worry about tiring out. But I'll want to go with my best to win games. Otherwise, what are you out there for?" Jones' excellent book, *Rebound*, written with Jack Warner for Quinlan Press, described the hardships of a very shy youngster growing up in the segregationist South. It traced the acquisition of wisdom in the face of hardship, in life and in basketball. For instance, when he was fired from the Bullets' job, Jones, even after returning to work for Auerbach in an assistant role in 1978, had given up hope of being a head coach in the league. This attitude of resignation, from a brilliant student of the game, from a man whose talents were unwanted after a fiery falling-out with former Celtic head coach Bill Fitch. Two key factors rescued K.C. then: his deep inner strength, and his marriage to Ellen Jones. (The two have a son, Christopher Jones, who is five years old.) Unexpectedly, K.C. had a second chance to coach: Auerbach hired K.C. in 1983 after Fitch's resignation, and Jones was out there again, proudly directing the team, like Glenn Miller directing his big band.

A nice success story and a feather in the cap of the proud Celtics' organization. The third quality which sustained Jones through the personally tumultuous years between coaching jobs, was that special love he has for the game. That is what drives him to keep working on the game, even when he's listening to Sinatra, working on business deals off the court, or playing racquetball with the boss, Red Auerbach. Jan Volk maintains that the generation of any team consists of about five years. Jones in his fifth season, only seems to be a better and better coach.

By Bob Schron

The return of Bill Walton to the Celtics roster this season appeared unlikely as the Celtics wound up play in the regular season. Walton, who had been working out with the team on a regular basis until April 4th, did not participate in any strenuous workouts after that time. He had attempted to push up his return to the team; after his foot was operated on last July 7th, prognostication was that the Redhead would be back to play the 1988-89 season. However, after walking the deep sandy beaches in Southern California and Mexico for several weeks during the winter and continuing to rehabilitate at Harvard for another month, Walton wanted to return in time for the final stages of the regular season and the playoffs.

As he was leaving the gym at Hellenic College last week, where, unfortunately, therapy has supplanted practice, Walton commented that he "felt terrible. The foot still hurts." He refused to elaborate.

"Bill challenged his foot two weeks ago," Celtics team doctor Arnold Scheller told *The Boston Globe* last week. "He did well in those practices, but he had a flare-up in the foot. We started him on some anti-inflammatories and he showed improvement. But the major thing has been the joint mobilization he's undergone with (trainer) Ed Lacerte and (orthopedic physical therapist) Dan Dyrek. Now he's on a plateau, and it's not a situation where you want to push it."

"It's hard for Bill because he's dealing with peer pressure, management pressure and the competitive pressure he puts on himself... We ran tests to verify that the bone is healing (and it is). The problem now is tenderness in the soft tissue surrounding it."

All along, Walton has maintained that the healing process has to be regarded as a long-term project. "I'm not concerned so much about when I come back and play," he said. "Of everything, I want to have my foot healed." Yet there are the complexities Scheller described: Walton's intensity on the practice floor for two weeks reflected a determination to resume play this season. His presence on the practice floor coincided with the team's resurgence in the past three weeks. This is a veteran team that plays best in the playoffs and it's a situation Walton wanted badly to be part of.

"But unfortunately," commented General Manager Jan Volk to Glenn Ordway on WEEI April 19th, "the news on Bill for this season just doesn't isn't good. He still has had pain in his foot when he's practiced."

Walton's roster spot has been a subject of speculation. It was thought that if Walton were to be activated late in the season or in the playoffs, rookie Reggie Lewis would be placed on the Injured List. Lewis has been battling leg problems late in the year. (The final decision on whether to activate Walton for the playoffs was made at midnight, April 24th, the final day of the regular season.)

The scenario was complex because the Celtics have a longer range situation to consider, namely, the decision on who to protect when the expansion lists are drawn up later in the summer. The Celtics

"It Still Hurts"

Bill Walton's Return is Forestalled

and all other NBA teams will be allowed to protect eight players, lose one and then freeze the remainder of the roster. The Celtics hypothetically would protect the starters (Dennis Johnson, Danny Ainge, Robert Parish, Kevin McHale and Larry Bird. Also: Jim Paxson appears to be a certainty to stay on the team, but after that there are questions). The Celtics have three groups of players on the bench. First is the impressive rookie crop, including Lewis, Brad Lohaus and Mark Acres, the latter two are forward-center types. The second grouping on

the Cs' pines include the veterans. Seemingly most vulnerable to be placed in availability: Dirk Minniefield, Fred Roberts and Artis Gilmore. Finally, there is the third: the brilliant, but vulnerable Walton.

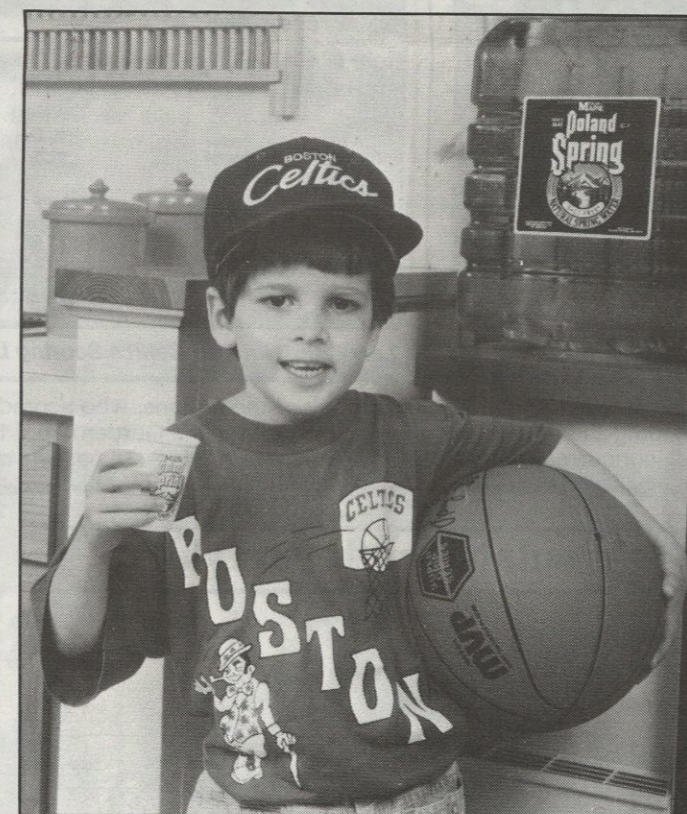
As they say, the Cs may be caught between a rock and a hard place regarding Walton, the star whose luminosity is dimmed because of his injury-plagued career. Despite those injuries, he might be attractive potentially to Miami or Charlotte, because of his marquee value. On the other hand, Red Auerbach, Volk,

K.C. Jones, Jimmy Rodgers and Chris Ford think very highly of all three rookies. They have bright futures in the Celtic context and they have already contributed this year. Minniefield, Roberts and Gilmore have also been fine role players for Boston this season and these men might be vulnerable because teams around the league may look to diminish one of the league's "haves" as part of their approach.

These are the concerns in the immediate future for both Walton and the Celtics. It's the feeling here that the Celtics will try and find a way to retain Walton, who helped them win the 1986 title. But the NBA is highly competitive and it will require some hard thinking. This season is out, however. For now, it appears to be a very uneasy "wait until next year."

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Celtics May Be Best Shooting Team Ever Lighting It Up

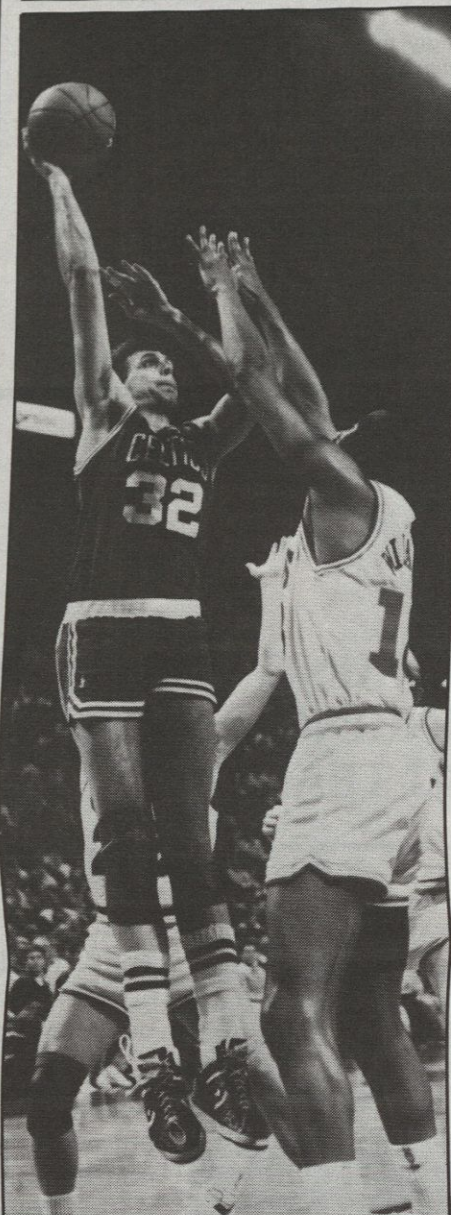
By Bob Schron

Entering the final weekend of the regular season, the Celtics were leading the NBA in all three shooting categories: field goal percentage, free throw percentage and three-point field goal marksmanship. Boston was shooting .520 from the field, .803 from the charity stripe and, in Danny Ainge and Larry Bird territory, Boston had converted .387 on three-pointers. Although none of these alone was a record, if the Celtics retain leadership in all three categories, it would be the first time in the history of the league (the NBA began the 3-point rule in time for the 1979-80 season) that one team led the league in all three categories over a season.

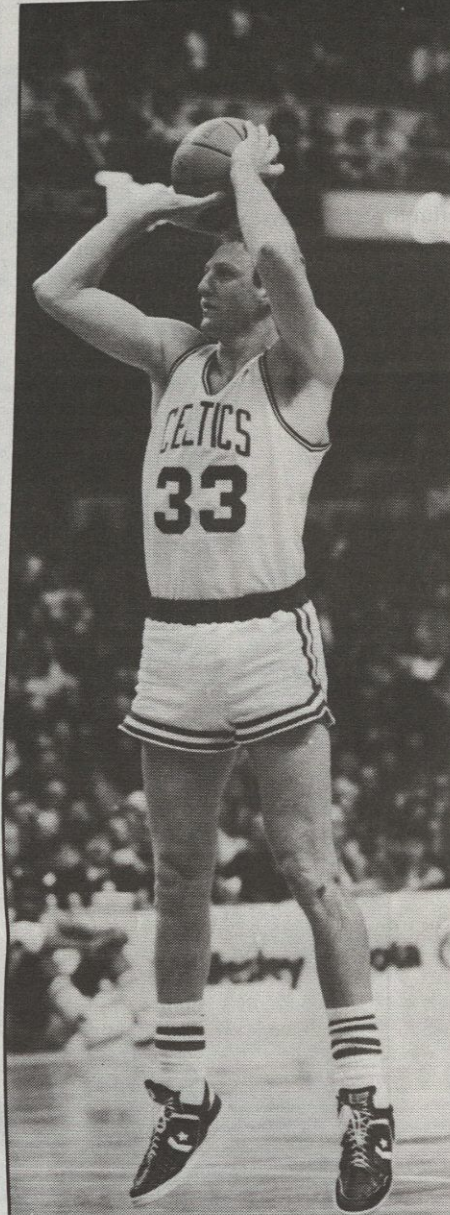
Since the three-point statistic has been recorded (when incidentally, the Celtics set the league record for percentage from that distance with a .384 mark,) only three teams have headed up even two percentage shooting categories. Denver led in field goal shooting and free throws in 1981-82, Boston led in free throws and threes in 1984-85 and last season the Lakers led the league in fielders and threes. Last season the Lakers edged out the Celtics by .001 (.367 to .366) in the three-point category, which prevented the Celtics, who led the circuit in free throws, from being one of the teams that led in two shooting percentage records. Of course, the Lakers and the Celtics met in the championship round last spring.

The Celtics this season have paced the league in other categories as well, including assists (2,331) and scoring differential (+6.4). The offense has benefited from the outstanding success the Celtics have enjoyed from the three-point line as well as the continued success Kevin McHale and Robert Parish have achieved at the blocks.

"Their spacing on their offense is great," commented the Mavericks' Mark Aguirre, a 25.2 ppg scorer. "They have a good feel and synch throughout their entire starting five."



Kevin McHale: High Percentage



Larry Bird: 2nd on Celtics Scoring List

"The addition of Jim Paxson has made them into an outstanding shooting team from the outside," concurred Adrian

tered, and this has their offense at a very high level."

The Celtics have also benefitted from the renewed emphasis on the running game, something K.C. Jones has stressed from the beginning of training camp in early October. Boston's running game has also been improved since the addition of Dirk Minniefield as a free-agent signee in mid-December. The point guard, who won the first annual Sixth Man of the Year last week as designated by SportsChannel viewers, has understood his role perfectly from the start of his tenure here. The Celtics, particularly Ainge, have thrived with the pass-conscious Minniefield out there. The presence of Minniefield seemed to open up Jones; he has relied increasingly on his bench since Dirk's arrival. Paxson, Mark Acres, Brad Lohaus, Fred Roberts and Artis Gilmore have all been contributors during the second half of the season.

The Celtics' season on the offensive end has been replete with highlights:

- **Danny Ainge** shattered Darrell Griffith's former record for most three-point field goals in a season. Ainge had 143 heading into the final weekend of the season, surpassing Griffith's record of 92.

- **Larry Bird** has tied his career high in field goal percentage, set last season, .525. In addition, he has a career high in free throws, at .916. Included in the latter were great streaks of 59 and 53 straight.

- **Kevin McHale and Robert Parish** are one-two in field goal percentage, attempting to become only the fourth pair of players on the same team to be one-two during the same season.

- **Larry Bird** is trying to duplicate his feat of last season: over .500 from the field and .900 from the line. He is the only man to have done this in league history.

- **Kevin McHale** is again attempting to shoot 60% and 80% from the field and free throw line respectively. He did this last season and is, like Bird in the previous category, the only man in league annals to have recorded this mark.

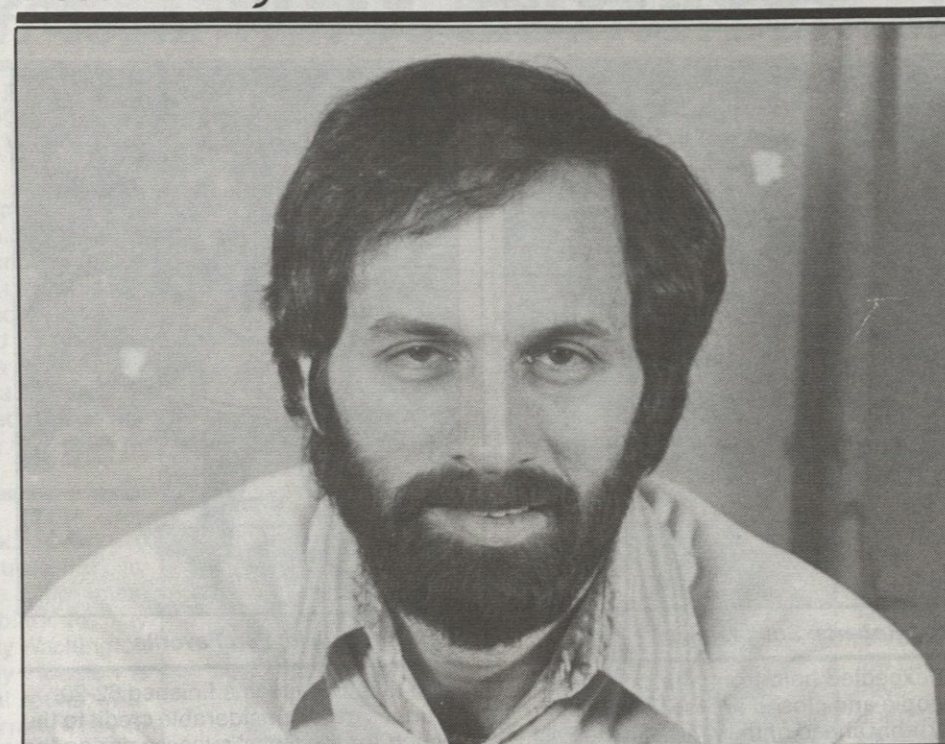
- **Individual records:** Bird moved into second place in the team's scoring career list with 17,788; Parish scored his 15,000th point in November; McHale scored his 10,000th point in February; Dennis Johnson recorded his 4,000th career assist last week; Danny Ainge scored a three-point goal in 223 consecutive games.

Jones has been adamant about the team's paying better attention to the defensive boards, and productivity has picked up in this area. Boston's .687 mark of retrieving their opponents' errant shots is now among the best in the league.

Johnson's role in this successful season on the offense cannot be overstated: he connected on 30 of 43 in his last eight games of the regular season (though he missed the final two contests of the season with a shoulder problem). In his last contest against Michael Jordan, Johnson limited Jordan to a 17-23 shooting night — yes, limited, since Jordan was unable to shake loose for bunches of points that night — and connected on 22 points and 15 assists. This offensive output form — Johnson, Bird and Ainge insist — is needed to maintain the type of superior balance the Celtics have achieved this season.

INNERVIEW

Pete Vecsey of the Post Has the Lowdown



Pete Vecsey: When Pete Speaks ...

CELITICS PRIDE: A lot of talk mentions how the league is swinging more and more to acquiring big power forwards. Would you agree with this analysis?

VECSEY: There really are some big-time power forwards all of a sudden, but I don't know, there are still a lot of great small forwards and off-guards too. Certainly, there are fewer good centers now than there ever were. Shoot, Ewing's probably gone up to second best center in the league, right? Right after Akeem. So maybe it's a reaction to an absence, rather than an emergence.

CELITICS PRIDE: Your thoughts on the Atlanta Hawks?

VECSEY: Well, they really didn't do anything with their club for two years. So they're basically the same, then Koncak goes down, Willis has a terrible season, and Whitman has only just started to come on. I can't see them doing anything. They play Milwaukee, and they probably should beat them, but it wouldn't surprise me if they didn't.

CELITICS PRIDE: Are you interested in the return of Don Nelson to coaching?

VECSEY: Yes, to a degree. I know one thing. I definitely don't agree with those who say he tried to knock George Karl out of the box. I think he really wanted to see how things were going to go for a

year or two. He was all for George getting an extension to his contract if he could. But George overplayed his hand. He thought he deserved an extension, but this is with a bad team. He probably thought he needed more money, or security, and unfortunately, George probably talked himself right out of the league for a while. He's the kind of guy who's not afraid to get right in your face, and he'll also go to the papers. He'll have to learn, like Hubie Brown, that he can moan and groan, but it's going to cost him a couple of jobs. You just can't rip your players in the papers, especially when they're paid a lot of money. When Hubie got into it with Ewing, he was gone.

CELITICS PRIDE: What's the prognosis for Hubie — will he be back coaching?

VECSEY: I was talking with him the other day. He's hoping to be considered for the Philadelphia job, but he hasn't been interviewed yet. But I think that should come fast. The 76ers have to decide whether or not to bring Lynam back, and I don't see how they can.

CELITICS PRIDE: What happened to the 76ers? Why have they come to such hard times, in your opinion?

VECSEY: Well, that one day where they made those two horrendous trades. Most of us at the time figured the Moses trade was bad, but none of us realized that the Daugherty trade was an even worse move. You know, we believed the papers a little. Daugherty had said he was soft; people were comparing him to Mike Gminski, who ironically, Philly ended up with. So that really cost them, and to compound things, Andrew Toney never came back, and Cheeks is less effective when Barkley controls the game.

CELITICS PRIDE: Is there anything about expansion that hasn't been said to date?

VECSEY: No, nothing other than maybe Van Nuys should get a franchise. They could probably just play whoever's out there at the time. (Laughs.) Although maybe that would make their roster too big.

They did come out with four names for the Charlotte franchise coaching job ... Stan Albeck, Matty Guokas, Jimmy Lynam and Dick Harter. Miami might be after Jimmy Lynam, maybe Frank Layden if he gets let go.

CELITICS PRIDE: Will any teams actually be affected by the expansion draft?

VECSEY: No, because there are very few teams who are going to lose a good player. Ironically, the teams that are going to lose the best players are the weaker teams around the league. Like the Warriors. If you look at their roster, they have to release a pretty good player.

CELITICS PRIDE: Your vote on MVP this year?

VECSEY: Well, I've been saying that since Magic got hurt, and the Lakers went down the tubes, that Magic should be MVP. Magic raises them to an impenetrable level. When he's in there they're a 70-win team; when he was out they were a .500 team. When Bird's out, the Celtics are still better than a .500 team, and Jordan just hasn't taken the Bulls to the level that Magic or Bird have. Last year I thought Jordan should have gotten it, and Magic did, this year I think Magic should get it, so Jordan probably will.

Pete Vecsey hardly needs an introduction to East Coast basketball. His column in the New York Post is one of the most widely-read in the area. Always insightful, sometimes controversial, Peter's writing has consistently scrutinized the players, executives and owners in the NBA. Pete was able to spend some time with *Celtics Pride* before the playoffs.

CELITICS PRIDE: do you see any surprises ahead in the playoffs?

VECSEY: I'm in the midst of figuring that out today. I think the Celtics bear watching. They're being picked by everybody to get to The Finals. I used a quote by Isiah Thomas the other day. When the playoffs roll around, I usually travel with the "hot" teams ... I was asking some of the Piston players and got back the usual answers. Most of them said, 'Yeah, travel with us.' and 'Yeah, if we just stay focused, we'll be all right.' When I asked Isiah, he said, 'Travel with the Celtics.' I thought that was pretty honest. (Laughs.) Detroit has a lot of manpower and a lot of skill on both sides of the ball, but there's a big ego problem on that team. They always seem to be worried about Isiah. Everybody else always seems to be worried about how Isiah feels: every time down-court, if he makes a nice pass, everybody goes out of their way to congratulate him. If he messes up, they go out of their way to say, 'Hey, don't worry about it.' I don't like to see that kind of thing, because what happens when the least little thing goes wrong? I mean, either you're a team or you're not. Why do you have to go around slapping each other on the back all the time?

CELITICS PRIDE: Who do you see in the West? Are you a Denver fan at all?

VECSEY: I haven't seen them enough to really tell you. If you look at the box scores, they seem to look really together. They're getting a lot of production out of a lot of people. I just don't know, once the playoffs begin, whether the Nuggets can carry it. You have a lot of guys on that team with no playoff experience. As well as Adams shoots from the outside, he's not a good shooter. We all know that once the playoffs begin, the defense tightens up and so do your arms. The Nuggets always rely heavily on outside shooting, but that's scoring that, for some reason, doesn't hurt you as much as good inside play.

CELITICS PRIDE: Anyone else out West to watch?

VECSEY: Well, Seattle is a real tough team that just doesn't have it together yet. Utah's playing real well; on the road, Dallas has folded lately, but they still have a good team with some playoff experience ... most of it bad. Portland doesn't have the experience either, yet they keep winning, no matter what. The play of Duckworth has been just amazing; he's so quick for a big man. There are about six teams in the West that have a chance of knocking everybody off. Even the Lakers are a bit vulnerable, now that there have been some injuries ...

CELITICS PRIDE: What's one of the series you'd like to watch?

VECSEY: I'd love to see the Cavaliers-Bulls series. That could be fun; both teams are good, they're both young. I really wish I could watch that series.

1987-88 Boston Celtics

The official Team Photo of the 1987-88 Celtics was taken prior to the team's game against the Detroit Pistons on Tuesday, April 19th. Here's how it looked:

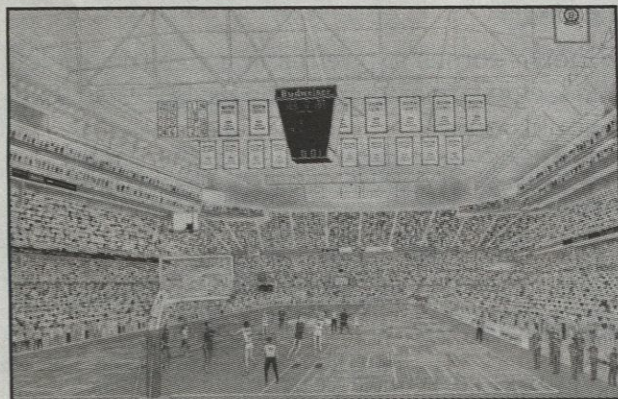


Front Row: Dirk Minniefield, Danny Ainge, Kevin McHale, Vice Chairman of the Board and Treasurer Alan M. Cohen, General Manager Jan Volk, President Red Auerbach, Head Coach K.C. Jones, Chairman of the Board Don F. Gaston, Robert Parish, Larry Bird, Dennis Johnson.

Back Row: Equipment Manager Wayne Lebeaux, Team Physician Arnold Scheller, Director of Player Personnel and Assistant Coach Jim Rodgers, Jim Paxson, Mark Acres, Bill Walton, Artis Gilmore, Brad Lohaus, Fred Roberts, Reggie Lewis, Assistant Coach Chris Ford, Trainer Ed Lacerte.

Missing from photo: Vice Chairman of the Board Paul R. Dupee, Jr.

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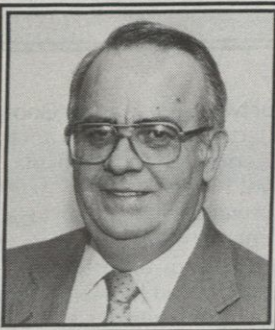


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COURTSIDE VIEW

By Eddie Gillyooly

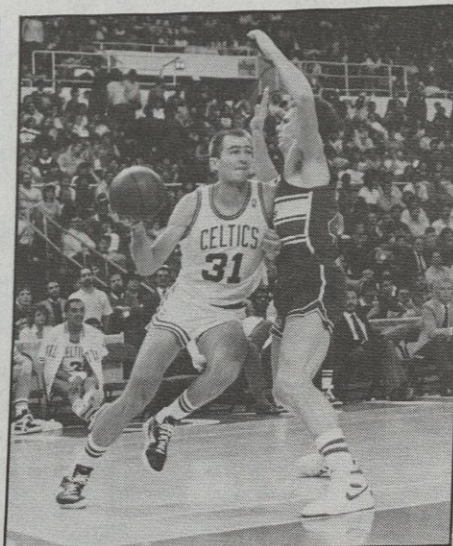
Doubt to Surprise

After the Celtics defeated the Detroit Pistons at the Garden to gain title to the best record in the Eastern Conference for the fifth consecutive time under K.C. Jones, the coach admitted that, for the first time, he entered the season with doubts that the feat could be accomplished.

"I had very strong doubts going into the season, because we had a lot of new players and we were going to be without Kevin McHale for the early part of the season," Jones revealed. "I thought it would be very difficult to finish ahead of Atlanta, Detroit and Chicago."

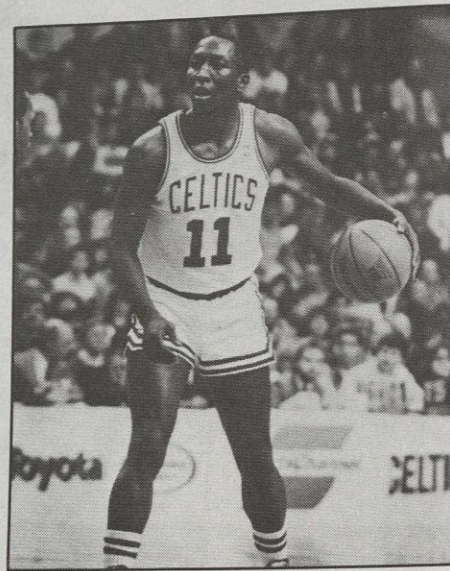
"Then, as the season progressed, Larry Bird suffered the ankle injuries, Robert Parish had back problems and Dennis Johnson missed some games with his chronic shoulder and we could never get into a consistent groove," the coach continued.

As it turned out, the Celtics received



Fred Roberts: Solid Minutes

unexpected help from a lot of different people and closed out the season comfortably ahead of their rivals in the East. In doing so, they captured their eighth Atlantic Division title in nine seasons, as well as the best record in the East for the eighth time in the nine Larry Bird years. The only time they failed to win the Division title and finish with the best mark in the East was in 1982-83, when they ended the season 56-26 and in second place behind Philadelphia. In 1980-81, the Celts tied Philadelphia for the Divi-



Dirk Minniefield: Fan Favorite

sion title. Both teams finished 62-20.

Jones gave considerable credit to the bench for the Celts' success during the regular season, citing Darren Daye and Fred Roberts for their contributions early in the season while McHale was recuperating from surgery.

Then in the second half of the season, Roberts rebounded from a mid-season slump to provide some solid minutes in relieving Bird. The additions of Dirk Minniefield, Jim Paxson and Artis Gilmore to the bench also proved vital in the Celtics' stretch drive.

When K.C. was asked which player exceeded his expectations this year, he answered quickly and emphatically, "Mark Acres." Signed as a free agent during the off-season after two years in Europe, Acres is one of three rookies on the squad. At 6'11", he has been effective filling in for both Robert Parish and McHale in the front court.

"Mark was a very important player for us this season," offered Jones. "He's a good defender and rebounder. He's very active under the basket and knows how to box out."

Jones said Acres is the most advanced of the rookies. "He's done a real nice job for us and I'm able to utilize his quickness in certain matchups. It's a nice feeling to have both Mark and Artis as backups for Robert. They have different styles, but both are effective."

The coach also was high in his praise of the other rookies, Reggie Lewis and Brad Lohaus. "They have talent, they are going to be players in this league. Both gained a lot of experience this year, and that should be very helpful to them in the future."

Acres, who graduated from Oral Roberts in 1985, was originally drafted by the Dallas Mavericks, but was cut in the training camp and decided to play in Europe. The level of talent in Europe doesn't come close to comparing with the talent in the NBA, but the two seasons abroad were valuable experience for his entry-level job with the Celtics. Despite his limited minutes, Acres is the team's fourth leading rebounder. He averages a rebound every 4.3 minutes, as compared to 4.4 for McHale, 4.2 for Bird and 3.6 for Parish. On the 48-minute projections, Acres would be averaging 11.2 rebounds a game.

Acres is still reluctant on offense, averaging only 3.6 points a game, but he's shooting at 53 percent, and Jones expects the offense will pick up as his confidence grows. The rookie has been working diligently with McHale to learn some moves and techniques under the basket.

Many of his baskets have resulted from his quickness on the offensive boards, and he has sparked on occasions on the scoring end of the fast break. He has good hands and reacts quickly when going to the basket. He just needs to be more assertive, and that will come in time.

Jones was also strong in his praise for Dirk Minniefield, who was signed as a free agent at mid-season to replace the injured Jerry Sichting in the backcourt.

"Dirk has been a real plus for us. He plays good defense and pushes the ball up the court," said Jones. "His contributions were most significant in several victories during the season." Minniefield became a big favorite with the fans because of his enthusiasm, and it was evident the fans appreciated his efforts when they voted him the Sixth Player of the Year Award in the balloting conducted by SportsChannel.

The award was presented during the halftime of the Celtics-Chicago game at the Garden. Kirk's statistics do not do justice to his value within the team.

In summing up, Jones said his greatest surprise as the season came to a close was that the Celtics would be going into the playoffs in good condition, with only a few minor injuries. "We went off the track a few times during the season, but I like the way we bounced back," said Jones, who will be seeking his third NBA championship in five years as head coach.

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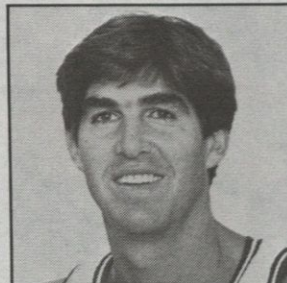
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CELTICS PERSPECTIVE

What Playoff Team Will Be the Most Difficult Opponent?

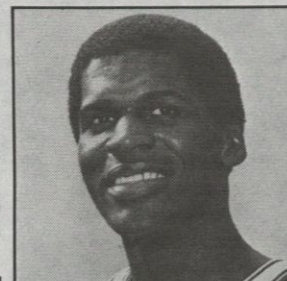
As the Celtics were preparing for their first round opponents in the playoffs, the players on the team were asked to assess the team's chances of winning the title. To arrive at this answer, the players were asked to critique their opponents: "Who will be the team's most difficult foe, and why. Who will play the Celtics best, and for what reasons? Do the players have a preference of foe?"

Mark Acres: Nothing will be easy in the playoffs. You can't afford to be underprepared. I don't think it matters who we play; rather, I think we have to concentrate on our game. But in the East, Detroit has given us problems, especially in Detroit, and the Cavs have also been tough for us. In the West, obviously the Lakers and also Denver. The Nuggets give us matchup problems (sometimes they'll use a center, three forwards and a small point guard against us). The Lakers have the record and the tradition. Any time you start four number one picks in the entire draft, you're good.



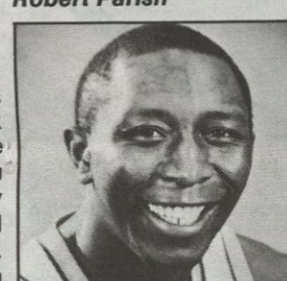
Mark Acres

Robert Parish: I think the playoffs are decided on two main factors. One is the ability to concentrate and play efficiently for forty-eight minutes. The other main determinant in winning is a team's ability to play effectively in the post-up game. That's why Washington is a tough team for us. That's also why Houston is always a threat to make it into the final round, with players like Akeem Olajuwon and Carroll. They've modeled their offense after ours, with Kevin McHale and myself.



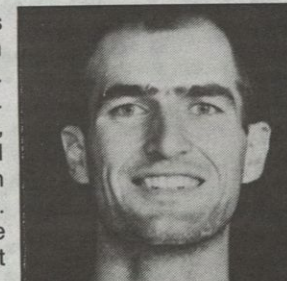
Robert Parish

Dirk Minniefield: I think the Chicago Bulls are a dark horse team this year, with Michael Jordan and a group of young players who believe in themselves. Other than the Bulls, the teams that have done well all year, such as Detroit and Atlanta, still have to be reckoned with. Look what Atlanta did to us the last time we played them in the regular season. The main idea is that in the playoffs you don't want to overlook anybody. To win you have to play good defense and rebound well. I think that Seattle did this against our team when I was with Houston last year. They out-defensed us and won the first two games in Houston, and we never caught up.



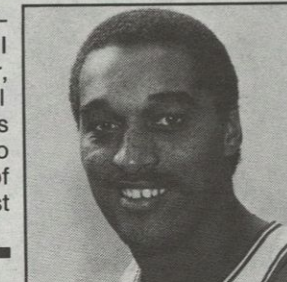
Dirk Minniefield

Fred Roberts: I think we'll do very well in the playoffs, as long as we're able to maintain our intensity as we seem to have done throughout the last month of the season. Our toughest team to play still has to be the Pistons. They were extremely hard to beat last season and, particularly in Detroit, they play us with confidence. I believe the emotions always run high in our games with them and they do give us some trouble with matchups. But underneath I think we have an advantage. But the intensity level of our games with them requires our best effort.



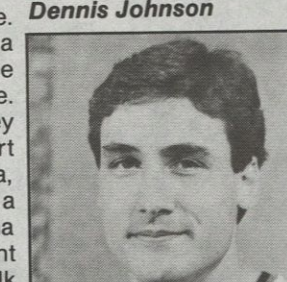
Fred Roberts

Dennis Johnson: All teams in the playoffs are challenging. Defenses are what matter most in the post season. I know I concentrate a lot harder at this time of the year, as in the past two years in the first round against Michael (Jordan). We've gone at it a couple of different ways — doubling a lot and then recently, going back to straight-up defense. But the challenge at this time of year is always exciting and makes you play your best ball.

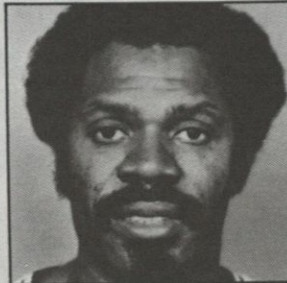


Dennis Johnson

Jim Paxson: I look at it as one playoff series at a time. The first series has its own challenges. (For me, this is a new feeling. I'm on the team that's the one to beat!) The eighth place team that'll be coming in here will be loose. They'll play because nobody expects them to win. They have nothing to lose. As the playoffs were ready to start we were going to play Washington, New York or Indiana, and each team had different strengths. Washington is a veteran team, New York is tough, aggressive, and Indiana is the least experienced of the three. What's different about the playoffs is the intensity level. When you walk out on the floor for the first playoff game, you know there's a different feeling about it.

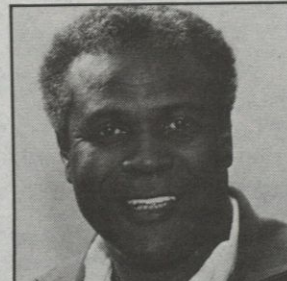


Jim Paxson



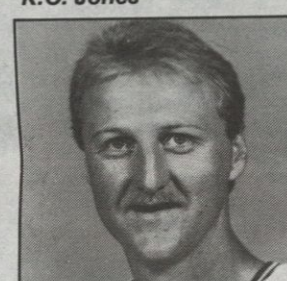
Artis Gilmore

Artis Gilmore: Well, the playoffs are a totally new season. They're very competitive, and it's difficult to pinpoint which teams will give you the hardest time. The intensity of the moment can change a mediocre team into a bear. I think we proved that when I was with the Spurs. The most memorable playoff for me, with the Spurs, was the season we took the Lakers to seven games in 1982-83, the season the 76ers beat them in four straight in The Finals. The main idea to remember in any pro season however, is that there are no highlights when you lose.



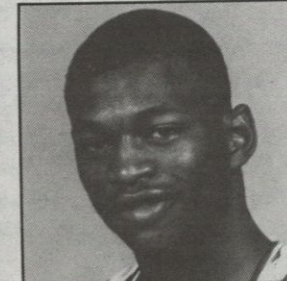
K.C. Jones

K.C. Jones: I've been concentrating on getting the team ready to execute properly on both ends of the floor, and I think this will be an aid as we head into the post-season. The main thought about the playoffs is there aren't any real surprises — Detroit, Atlanta, Chicago, and of course the Lakers and Houston in the West — are all team that have proven their quality over the season. They'll undoubtedly be there again.



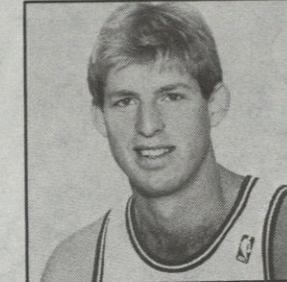
Larry Bird

Larry Bird: I don't really think too much about it. My major concern is contributing to our team and helping our team be ready for each round. The last couple of years, I've thought Detroit has had a strong club, but we've played them pretty well recently. We have confidence in our game against them in the Garden. I was hoping that Indiana would make the playoffs one time in my career. I've always said that I'd like to go up against them. They represent the league from my home state, and I'd look forward to that challenge.



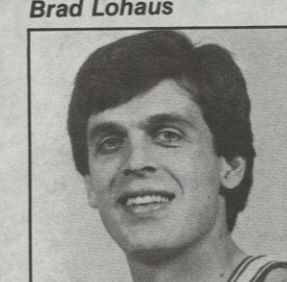
Reggie Lewis

Reggie Lewis: The teams I respect the most are Detroit and Chicago in the Eastern Conference. I think both of those teams are tough, playoff-tested clubs, and can play a tough forty-eight minute game against us. They also have an added incentive, because they want to beat the Celtics. Their styles are very physical and they're especially tough when they play at home, able to come out that much harder with the home crowd behind them.



Brad Lohaus

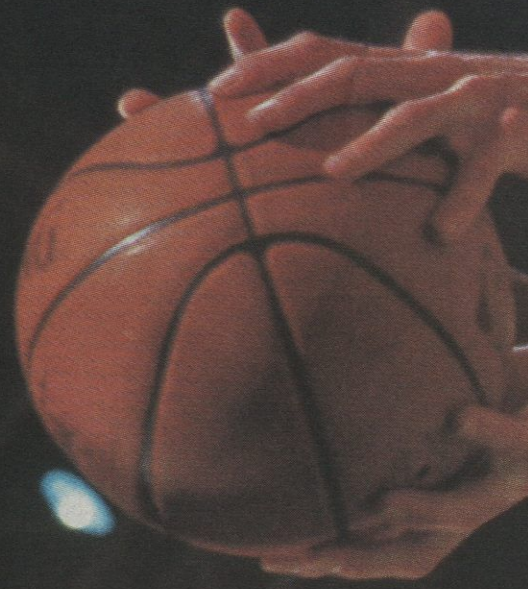
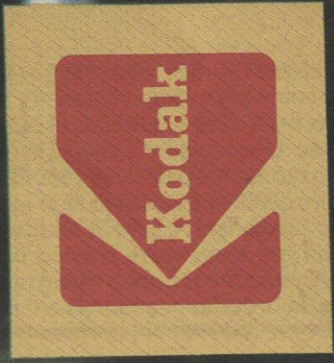
Brad Lohaus: We've struggled on the road against the Cleveland Cavs this season, so I have to regard them as the team that we have to be most careful with. Also, against the New York Knicks, the competition has been tough. I don't look past the first two rounds of the playoffs — not even past the first round, really. I've learned through tournament experience that you don't look past even one game. You take them one at a time. We never even talked about a future opponent in the playoffs.



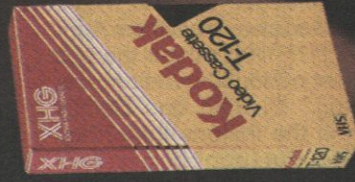
Kevin McHale

Kevin McHale: I think you have to go after each opponent with the same high level of intensity in the playoffs. We see some pretty fired-up teams in our series (that's why we've had tense playoffs in each early round we've played in during the past five years. Cleveland played us very well in 1985 and Chicago also was a struggle in the past two seasons). I'll play it with two ideas in mind. Knock off the team we're playing first, but I'll always keep my eye on the top spot, trying to improve my game all along, in order to peak for The Finals.





Steve Nash



CELTICS CONFIDENTIAL

By Bob Schron

The Bird. The multi-faceted **Larry Bird**, part legend already, part superstar, continues to have a great season ... Bird told **Bob Ryan** of *The Boston Globe* during warm-ups before the road game at Washington in late April that he thought the rims were "inches too low" ... Inches ... Maintenance men were brought in to measure said hoops — they were an inch too low ... Bird has been industrious off the floor as well: he will host a charity All-Star game at the Indiana Sports complex for needy athletes on June 26 ... he has received one of the largest advances in publishing history — \$750,000 for his autobiography to be published by *Doubleday* ... Bird remains the guiding conscience of the team, blasting the club's effort in a disappointing 98-92 defeat in Washington: **K.C. Jones**, told of the Captain's remarks, claimed, "I'm glad if a player makes that type of statement ... Don't misunderstand, I hate losing. But if I criticize openly, it backfires, it gets the opposite effect from what I'm trying to achieve." Bird for his part, pointed out that the return of **Dennis Johnson** to the lineup after Johnson missed two games would be the answer. "Getting DJ back will help. When you take one link out, it affects the entire team. With him playing again, we can get back to our kind of basketball."

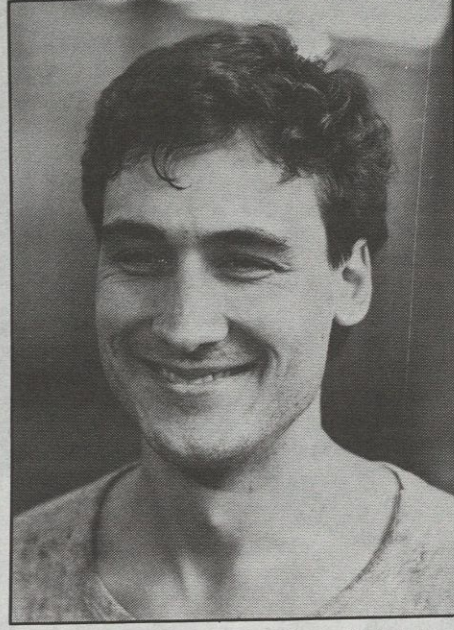
The Oregon Special Olympics were well represented at a recent Celtics practice after that Special Olympics' team placed seven finishers in the 92nd running of the Boston Marathon ... Twenty-three friends and acquaintances of **Chris Ford** bussed up the Atlantic Coast from Atlantic City to watch the Celtics play the Pistons during the final week of the regular season ... **Red Auerbach** was a guest at halftime of the Washington contest on the road. Red took what you might call an adversarial stance against some recent anti-Celtics statement made by Lakers' coach **Pat Riley**. "Sometimes I think he forgets what a talented team he has. That type of talent makes a guy a great coach too, don't forget." ... **Danny Ainge** was the featured Celtic in Sportschannel's play-off promotions as the regular season came to a close. With the playoff tickets in Boston as rare as precious jewels, Ainge plays himself as the beleaguered recipient of endless phone calls from friends asking for ducats. Whereupon the advice is to consult the cable outlet which will televise all Celtics' home games which aren't televised by CBS. ... **Corky Meini**, who covers the Pistons for *The Detroit News* comments on the Pistons' attitude toward the Celtics: "I think the Pistons have felt they could beat the Celtics in Boston, but after they slumped a bit on the West Coast and the slide continued at home (defeated by Atlanta in the Silverdome, in late March), their confidence began to wane. Then, after Boston pulled away from them April 1st in Boston (117-110), I think there is now an element of doubt in their minds against Boston." ... Said one Celtics player: "I think the Pistons think they can play with us. But I don't believe they think they can beat us. You can see it in their faces whenever we make a run at them during a game." ... **Dirk Minniefield**



Larry Bird: Autobiography in the Works

will hold two basketball camps this summer, one of those in Belmont, New Hampshire. ... **Brad Lohaus** continues to have a five-star post-graduate course on the post-up game with mentor **Kevin McHale** after nearly every practice ... **Bill Walton's** foot continues to give him much pain ... **K.C. Jones' Annual Charity Golf Tournament** will be held July 25th. Call the Celtics' office at 523-6050 for further details ... **Willis Reed** began strongly with the Nets but his team fell on hard times, losing eleven in a row as the season wound down. "I think it's hard for veteran players to will themselves and be mentally tough when (you're so far behind and) out of the playoffs. Some guys can go after personal goals and that helps your performance a little, but it doesn't help you win. We're trying to look at younger players and make some evaluations with expansion coming up. We still want to win, but we need to see what we have as first priority now." ... **Dirk Minniefield** is one former Houston Rocket (incidentally, Minniefield still retains the home he purchased in Houston and will spend part of the off-season there) who believes the Rockets could handle the Lakers should they meet in the playoffs, "because they match up in important positions with them: **Akeem Olajuwon** vs. **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**, **Jim Petersen** vs. **James Worthy** and **Rodney McCray** when he takes **Magic Johnson**." Two keys, according to Minniefield, should the teams meet: "I think Rodney McCray would have an outstanding series against LA and I think the Lakers are as banged up this year as we were last season."

In the record department, **Kevin McHale** (.600) and **Robert Parish** (.585) continued to run one-two in the field goal percentage rankings, threatening to become only the fourth set of teammates to finish on top in that category ... Also, both McHale and **Larry Bird** are striving to set personal marksmanship records, with Bird trying to shoot over 50% (.525) and 90% (.916) from the free throw line and McHale trying to shoot the aforementioned 60% FGs and over 80% (.799) from the line. Both men accomplished these feats last season and are attempting to duplicate the feat ...



Jim Paxson: Dangerous from Outside

Larry Bird ran off another 53 consecutive free throws last week; finally the streak was snapped when he missed in the fourth quarter of the 98-92 road defeat against Washington. He had just been leveled on a drive ... Bird was asked who he thought the MVP was after the Celtics defeated the Pistons last week. His revised opinion: "I thought a lot about it, having been asked so many times. I really think **Michael Jordan** deserves it. He helped his team win over 50 games, he's shot a high percentage this season (.533) and his team's improved so much. I think he's been the best player in the league this season." ... The Celtics' clash against the Pistons, a type of showdown affair for the best record in the Eastern Conference, attracted national columnist *USA Today's* **Tom Weir** and author **Roland Lazenby**, who co-authored *Hoops* with **Billy Packer** (CP, Vol III #10) ... Boston Marathon winner **Ibrahim Hussein** and runner-up **Juma Ikangaa** were guests of the Celtics in the sky boxes when the Celtics defeated the Pistons April 19th ... **Isiah Thomas** commented that the Celtics appeared to be the team to beat for the Eastern title. Asked if he thought the Pistons were a better team this season than last year (when Detroit battled Boston to seven games in the

Eastern Finals), Thomas flatly declared "Yes." ... **James Edwards**, the Pistons' backup center, and **Dennis Johnson** exchanged pleasantries before the game when Detroit was here. The two were teammates in Phoenix.

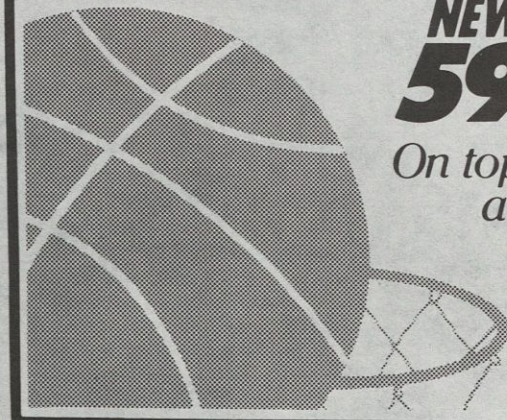
Adrian Dantley scored his 21,000th point against the Celtics to move into 11th place all-time in the professional scoring list ... **K.C. Jones** allowed the team a day off from practice after the Celtics clinched the Eastern Conference title ... *Sports Illustrated* was doing a feature on the Pistons' Detroit's **Dennis Rodman** when the Pistons were here ... **Chuck Daly**, coach of the Pistons, was extremely impressed with the Celtics' effort against his team. "I'd think realistically you'd have to consider them the favorite to unseat the Lakers, and quite possibly, maybe even more of a favorite than LA." ... The Greenhaven Elementary School in Hibbing Minnesota featured a fifth grade collectively written biography of one of Hibbing's favorite sons, **Kevin McHale** ... Boston University coach **Mike Jarvis** who led the Terriers into the NCAA Tournament and an ECAC North Atlantic Conference championship, was on hand as the Celtics defeated the Bucks April 13th ... **K.C. Jones** ranks as an admirer of Jarvis' defense.

Bill Rafferty, who covered the NCAA extensively this year for CBS and ESPN, thinks that the following centers will receive the most consideration in the upcoming draft: **Rick Smits** (Marist), **Will Perdue** (Vanderbilt), **Rony Selikue** (Syrause) and **Eric Lechner** (Wyoming) ... Apparently **Gary St. Jean**, the Boston native who has worked very hard in the league, might be leaving his post as assistant coach of the Nets to join former Celtic and new Warriors' head coach, **Don Nelson** ... The Celtics were scheduled to open the post-season with games on Friday, April 29 and May 1 in the Boston Garden ... **Isiah Thomas** on the chances of the Celtics: "They appear to be better than they were at this time last year. They're healthier for one thing, and their bench has played better for them. But their starters are still the group that do the most damage to a team. Plus, the addition of **Jim Paxson** (with **Danny Ainge**) makes them a hard team to defend. With their inside game, now they have great outside shooting, too."

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GAME BY GAME

Boston 123 Milwaukee 104, April 13 at Boston Garden

The potent front line of the Celtics led the way as Boston easily defeated Milwaukee at Boston Garden. The Celtics were paced by Larry Bird's triple-double, with the star forward tallying 26 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

Boston edged out to 26-19 and 58-46 at the opening two checkpoints, as Milwaukee fairly succeeded in keeping the Celtics to a halfcourt game. But after halftime, Boston blasted out in full gear, using an upbeat tempo engineered by Dennis Johnson. Boston exploded twice in the decisive third period, constructing a 77-60 lead 7:14 into the second half on three transition scores and three other inside shots off the halfcourt execution.

Milwaukee would stabilize briefly behind Terry Cummings, keeping the game at 82-65 for the ensuing two minutes, but Boston again broke away, using the transition game. A pair of breaks, each time keyed by a Johnson defensive rebound, brought the Garden crowd to its feet. When Bird swept in down the right sideline on a touch pass from Robert Parish in the middle, the Celtics had a 90-65 margin and were never threatened again.

All three Celtics frontline starters scored over twenty — Bird's 26 were followed by Kevin McHale's and Parish's 21. McHale also had 10 rebounds. Cummings' 21 paced Milwaukee.

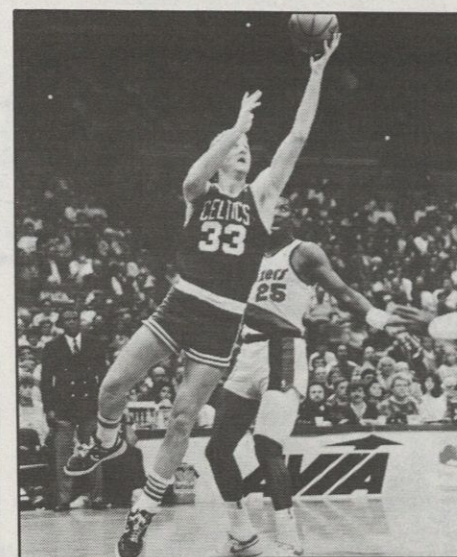
Cleveland 120 Boston 109, April 15 at Richfield Coliseum

Brad Daugherty powered to a game-breaking 44 points and the Cleveland Cavs rallied from a 17-point second quarter deficit to upend the Celtics at the Richfield Coliseum. The defeat snapped the Celtics' eight-game winning streak. Also, the Green played without Dennis Johnson, who remained in Boston with a recurrence of his shoulder injury.

The Celtics haven't won in Cleveland since April 1, 1986.

Boston dominated affairs throughout the opening twenty minutes of this contest as Larry Bird and Jim Paxson paced a fundamentally sound offense in the halfcourt game and the Cs defense played as well as it has all season. Boston led 38-33 after the first quarter and behind Bird and Paxson, they would stretch out to a 56-39 advantage late in the half. Cleveland coach Lenny Wilkens called three timeouts during this run, as the Cavs desperately attempted to stay with the visitors. With Mark Price and eventually the towering Daugherty leading the way, the Cavs did fight their way back. Price and Ron Harper keyed a late first half rally to cut the Cs margin to 64-57 and the tempo changed completely thereafter.

Daugherty's offense and the Cleveland pressure defense ensured that. "They pressured our backcourt," explained K.C. Jones later, "and we didn't respond." Boston turned the ball over 20 times and the defensive effort ebbed; with a sell-out crowd of 20,146 roaring, Daugherty became a tidal wave. The Celtics steadied themselves (again behind Paxson) to lead 96-90 with 7:55 left, but then Daugherty took over. The second year All-Star powered, drove and hustled for 18 of the



Larry Bird: Another Triple-Double

ensuing Cavs' 22 points and with two minutes remaining, a seemingly sure Celtics victory disappeared. Cleveland led 109-102 and the Cs were unable to respond. Bird led the Celtics with 30 and Paxson added 19. Harper added 30 to Daugherty's game-high total.

Washington 98 Boston 92, April 18 at Capital Centre

Moses Malone scored 24 points, pulled down 14 rebounds and scored the deciding basket with :31 remaining in the game to lead the Bullets to the win in Landover. The victory for Washington moved the Bullets into a tie with the Knicks for the final playoff spot in the East as the regular season entered its final week. The Bullets' win was also the first over the Celtics this season.

For Boston, the defeat was costly; the Lakers lost to Houston that same afternoon, which meant Boston lost an opportunity to gain ground in their search for the best record in the league. Boston also lost both games on the abbreviated trip through Cleveland and Landover after having won eight straight games from March 25-April 13.

The Celtics and Bullets battled through five ties and lead changes early before the Bullets assumed control through much of the first half, paced by the scoring of Jeff Malone (23) and John Williams. Danny Ainge and Larry Bird scored five points in the final thirty seconds of the half to close the gap to a respectable 55-50 margin at intermission. The third quarter, at first promising for

Boston when they surged out to a 65-62 lead behind Bird, later would prove their undoing. Frank Johnson came off the Bullets bench to spark an 18-4 run as Washington gained an 80-69 lead. It would mean the difference in the game. Ainge, Bird and Jim Paxson would rally the Celtics down the stretch, with the latter scoring two field goals to forge Celtics leads of 90-89 and 92-91, the latter with 1:40 remaining. But Washington, desperate for the playoffs, delivered when the game was on the line. Williams converted a second and third try for a one-point lead and Darrell Walker followed this with a steal from Parish for a 95-92 Washington lead. After McHale was called for offensive goaltending, Moses Malone's field goal clinched matters. Bird led the Celtics with 23 points and Ainge had 21 with 9 assists, including 5-11 on three-pointers. Dennis Johnson missed his second straight game.

Boston 121 Detroit 110, April 19 at Boston Garden

Kevin McHale scored on thirteen of fifteen field goal attempts and led the Celtics to the Eastern Conference-clinching victory over the Detroit Pistons. The Celtics won the Eastern Conference championship for the fifth consecutive season, (or every season since K.C. Jones took over the coaching reins in 1983).

Boston's scoring was again paced by the inside attack as McHale (31) Robert Parish (25) and Larry Bird (22) all scored over twenty points for the third time in the past five games, the eighth time all season. The Celtics controlled this contest however with an overpowering defense. Danny Ainge was the key figure here, substituting his normal emphasis on the three-point field goal (he was 1 for 2 from that distance for the evening) for a type of "junk" defense. Ainge performed two functions defensively, hustling over to double-team Adrian Dantley each time the latter had the ball and then hustling back across the court to find his own man after forcing Dantley to give the ball up. After that, as Jones likes to say, the offense came from the defense.

After trailing early, 4-0, Boston really dominated, gaining leads of 18-10 (all but a fast break basket by Jim Paxson scored by the aforementioned front line), 23-14 and 31-22 in the first quarter. In addition, the Celtics received a strong boost from the bench: a five of Gilmore-McHale-Roberts-Minniefield-Johnson salvaged a 45-31 lead with the fast break, and when

the starters returned fresh, the lead was 61-45 moments before halftime, on nine markers each from McHale and Bird. Detroit, which lost in Boston for the 22nd straight time, didn't have an answer after the break either. Ainge tallied the first five points of the third quarter and the Celtics, after pushing the lead to 83-57 and 95-72, were champions of the East again. Parish's 12 rebounds paced Boston and Bird had 9 assists. Dantley had 21 for Detroit.

Boston 126, Chicago 119, April 21 at Boston Garden

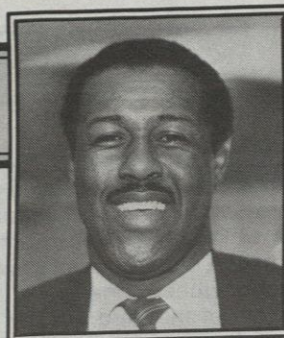
The Celtics concluded their regular season schedule at the Garden by defeating the Bulls. Boston finishes its regular season on the road, with games in Atlanta and Chicago. Boston was led by Larry Bird's 44 points; Bird sprained his left ankle with 3:15 remaining in the contest, and was expected to miss the final two games before the playoffs.

The Celtics had already clinched their playoff position by virtue of their win over Detroit Tuesday. But Chicago was playing to nail down the third-best record in the conference, and in the beginning it appeared the Bulls' increased incentive might carry them to the win. Ex-Celtic Sam Vincent scored nine in the opening stanza, tallying a three-point play, an 18-foot jumper and a drive and feed to Brad Sellars. This last play sent the Bulls to an early 21-14 advantage at 4:30 of the first quarter. Although the Bulls would continue to play well throughout the night, the seven point first quarter margin would be their largest of the contest. Bird, Dennis Johnson and a strong shooting performance over the first three quarters of the game ensured the win. The Celtics rebounded by outscoring Chicago 19-6 for the remainder of the first quarter, and were never headed. Bird poured in 12 second quarter points to spark that surge, and Dennis Johnson turned in an outstanding offensive/defensive performance. In a stirring exchange to end the half, Johnson connected on two long jumpers, one a three-point FG, to give the Celtics a 68-63 lead at intermission.

The Celtics held the lead throughout the second half, keeping likely league MVP Michael Jordan from running off demoralizing streaks of points. Bird shot 8 for 9 in the third period and Johnson stayed with Jordan while completing a 22 point, 15 assist evening. The Bulls would pull within 110-106 late, but Boston held on for the victory. Jordan led the Bulls with 37.

Boston Celtics Statistics

THROUGH APRIL 24 (57-25)													1987-88 FINAL REGULAR SEASON STATISTICS															
PLAYER	G	GS	MIN	-FIELD GOALS-			-3-PT-			-FREE THROWS-			--REBOUNDS--															
				FG	FPA	PCT	FG	FPA	PCT	FT	FTA	PCT	OFF	DEF	TO	AST	PF	DQ	STL	TO	BLK	PTS	AVG	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5
BIRD	76	75	2965	881	1672	.527	98	237	.415	453	916	.493	108	395	703	467	157	0	125	213	57	2275	29	49	4	1	1	1
MCHEALE	44	43	2290	550	911	.604	0	0	.000	346	434	.797	159	377	536	171	179	1	27	141	92	1446	22	6	3	1	1	1
AINGE	81	81	3018	482	982	.491	148	357	.415	190	249	.767	59	190	249	503	203	1	115	153	17	1270	15	7	3	3	3	3
PARISH	74	73	2312	442	750	.589	0	1	.177	241	734	.328	173	455	628	115	198	5	35	154	84	1061	14	2	1	1	1	1
JOHNSON	77	74	2670	352	803	.438	12	46	.255	298	856	.348	178	240	398	204	0	93	195	29	971	12	6	2	1	1	1	1
PAKSON (TOT)	45	3	801	137	298	.460	5	21	.238	79	861	.091	15	30	45	76	73	0	30	39	5	347	7	7	1	1	1	1
PAKSON (BOS)	28	2	538	94	191	.492	2	13	.154	61	885	.068	7	20	27	49	44	0	23	28	4	244	8	7	1	1	1	1
ROBERTS	74	14	1032	161	330	.488	0	6	.128	165	776	.209	60	102	162	81	118	0	16	68	15	450	6	1	1	1	1	1
DAYE	47	8	655	112	217	.516	0	1	.397	87	678	.130	30	46	76	71	68	0	29	44	4	280	6	0	1	1	1	1
LEWIS	49	0	405	90	193	.466	0	4	.407	57	702	.081	28	39	63	26	34	0	16	30	13	320	6	5	1	1	1	1
LOHAUS	70	4	718	122	246	.496	3	13	.231	50	62	.806	46	92	138	49	123	1	20	59	41	297	4	2	1	1	1	1
STICHTING	24	1	370	44	82	.537	2	8	.250	12	667	.018	3	16	21	60	30	0	14	14	0	98	4	1	1	1	1	1
GILMORE (TOT)	71	27	893	99	181	.547	0	0	.000	67	128	.523	69	142	211	21	148	0	15	67	30	265	3	7	1	1	1	1
GILMORE (BOS)	47	4	521	39	101	.374	0	0	.000	48	91	.527	34	94	148	12	94	0	10	39	18	164	3	5	1	1	1	1
ACRES	79	5	1151	108	203	.532	0	0	.000	71	111	.640	105	163	270	42	198	2	29	54	27	287	3	6	1	1	1	1
MINNIEFIELD-TOT	72	6	1070	108	221	.489	4	16	.250	41	55	.745	30	66	96	228	133	0	39	93	3	261	3	6	1	1	1	1
MINNIEFIELD-BOS	61	6	868	83	173	.480	3	11	.273	32	844	.038	22	53	75	190	107	0	44	77	3	196	3	2	1	1	1	1
HENRY	10	0	81	11	28	.393	3	8	.375	9	10	.900	2	8	10	12	11	0	1	9	1	34	3	4	1	1	1	1
KITE	13	0	86	9	23	.391	0	0	.000	1	6	.167	10	14	24	2	16	0	3	9	8	19	1	5	1	1	1	1
CELTICS	82	17780	3599	6905	1521	.521	271	705	.386	2300	803	.930	2440	3370	2448	1804	10	620	1304	413	9315	113	6	143	1	1	1	1
OPPONENTS	82	17780	3497	7260	482	.412	110	366	.298	1724	2249	.767	1122	2194	3316	2061	1989	29	734	1176	346	8628	107	7	13	1	1	1



AS I SEE IT

By M.L. Carr

The Rivals

The ceremony last week in Philadelphia honoring the great Julius Erving, is a sound point of departure to discuss a very important motivational factor in the play-offs. Namely, teams build up rivalries over a period of games, months, years, seasons. It isn't news to point out that when I played, our biggest rival was Julius and the 76ers. I read last week where Mike Fine of *The Quincy Patriot-Ledger* stated that the Doctor really held the team together last year, that in his opinion the Sixers were ready to fall last year except for his leadership. I don't really wish to enter into all of the politics of the situation in Philly because it's a situation I'm not totally familiar with. But some of the moves of that franchise over the past several seasons contrast sharply with the slow subtle changes effected by the Celtics.

The 76ers felt that it was necessary to trade a player of Moses Malone's stature, and the team hasn't really ever been the same since. I talked at length last issue about roles: I don't think there was ever the same comfort there after Moses left the Sixers. He was always the type of player who worked hard underneath (great pride, so he would let it be known in his way if things weren't going right). Moses was the player who went in and rebounded the ball. A "street fighter" type of player who was imperative if the finesse players and scorers were to perform their functions well. Now I see that other stars of my era are struggling, a player like Andrew Toney, for example. He always hurt us, but he's always apparently had to fight for acceptance on his own ball club. The attitude is different from that here.

I think I've found, in life after basketball, that two key ingredients of success in business are planned change and the ability to remain with an idea that's successful. I think the Celtics have put together a system that has stood the test of time: replacing Russell with Cowens and Cowens with Parish for example. Or building a team around a solid nucleus, such as the very successful starting five that has keyed two championships here in the eighties. Planned change took place around these men; we all suffered when Lenny Bias passed away and were disappointed when Sam Vincent didn't seem to adjust to his role here. But others have surfaced: Mark Acres, Reggie Lewis and Brad Lohaus have comprised a promising rookie corps this season, for example. And when veteran reinforcements were brought in, ranging from stars like Bill Walton to role players like Artis Gilmore, support enhanced continuity. We remained the same, but better. I think Red Auerbach and Jan Volk would be the first men to tell you that



Michael Jordan: Presents Many Problems

there is more than one way to win. So the rivalries between Boston and Detroit, Boston and Atlanta and Chicago and of course, Boston and LA, perpetuate themselves, and the competition for the top prize in the NBA is still white-hot. Boston and Detroit fight now for supremacy in the East; the Pistons can never forget they had a golden chance to win it all

last season and play angry now because the memory of Larry Bird stealing Isiah Thomas's pass in Game Five of the Eastern Conference final series haunts them. I think the Celtics respect Detroit and the Celtics play more alertly when challenged. I enjoy — like other fans, I suspect — the personalities of the different ballclubs. Detroit is angry, expres-

sive; Atlanta is plagued with the label of "next year's champions" and struggle to escape that role. Michael Jordan makes the Bulls a challenge and a problem. From the Celtics' perspective, the Bulls' personality is extremely dangerous because Michael is a threat to win a game by himself.

This is the time of the year when teams are simultaneously deeply concerned with their own game and that of their rivals. This is the time of the year where sound, coherent organization counts as much as error-free play on the court. I read last week where Sidney Moncrief stated that "he wasn't even looking at the Celtics' game" after the Celtics defeated the Bucks handily in Boston. "I'm more concerned with what we're (the Bucks) are doing. The opponents will take care of themselves if we can do what we have to do," he concluded. It's true: this is the time of the year when teams are polishing their strengths and focusing on their weaknesses, trying continually to improve. This is also the time though, when scouts earn their salaries. They are the people who allow the team itself to play and not worry about the next playoff opponents. The scouts do that. And this is how the best organizations win.

We return finally to the major rivals — the Celtics and the Lakers. They're still the teams to beat and they have battled all year to try and get back to the summit. It bears repeating: we beat the Lakers in 1984 because we were unafraid to play physically against (probably) better athletes. The following two Finals series (1985 and 1987), the Lakers won by assuming our more physical style of play. It's intriguing. Teams that have played well against the Lakers this year have run on them. If the teams meet in the Finals, will the Celtics adopt one of their arch-rivals' main weapons, the running game, and defeat the Lakers this year?

Boston Celtics Caribbean Cruise

SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS — AUGUST 27 - SEPTEMBER 3, 1988

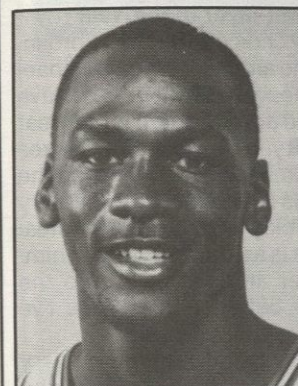
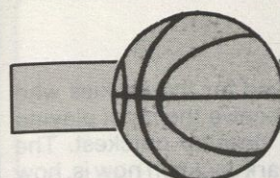


Prices start as low as \$1,355 per person. (Includes airfare to Miami, cruise, meals, parties, etc.)

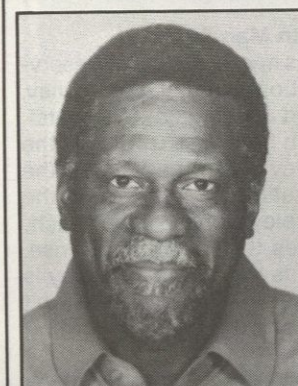
To hold your cabin, just send a deposit of \$250⁰⁰ to: Four Seasons Travel, 281 Winter St., Waltham, MA. The balance will not be due until July 1st. Call for more information, (617) 890-7930.

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ROUNDBALL SPOKEN HERE



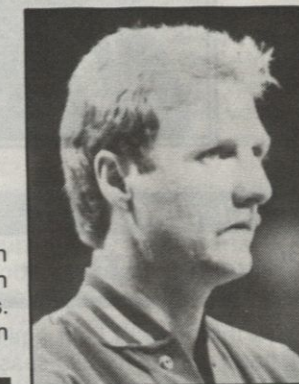
Michael Jordan



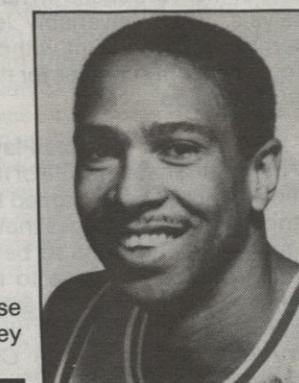
Bill Russell

Michael Jordan: assessing the possibility of the rejuvenated New York Knicks facing the Celtics in the first round of the playoffs: "I would like to see the Knicks finish eighth. That would be best for us (the Bulls). The Knicks would then have to play the Celtics, and I would hope that series goes the full five games. Then, after we beat the Milwaukee Bucks in the first round (at the time of the quote, Chicago's likely first round opponent in the post season), we'll come up against a tired Celtics team in the next round."

Larry Bird's views on his contract in light of the new deal signed by Michael Jordan of the Bulls (reportedly \$28 million over eight years): "When I sign a contract, I sign it in good faith. I don't begrudge Michael; he's a great player and fills the arenas. Being one of the top players in the league (as I am), you like to be in that company in all aspects ... but I haven't plans to ask the Celtics to increase my pay."



Larry Bird



Mychal Thompson

Mychal Thompson, on the ever-menacing presence of the Celtics, trailing close behind for the best record in the NBA: "The Celtics are watching us so closely, they can see all the way out to L.A. without a TV or binoculars."

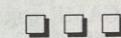


Celtics Basketball Camp Directory

Here is the list of 1988 Summer Basketball Camps conducted by/affiliated with Boston Celtics personnel:

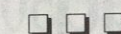
1st Annual Kevin McHale Basketball Day Camp

WHERE: Ocean Edge Resort (on Cape Code Bay)
One Village Drive, Route 6A
Brewster, MA 02631
DATES: July 11 - July 15
COST: \$200.00
INFO: Kevin McHale Basketball Camp
Ocean Edge Resort
One Village Drive
Route 6A
Brewster, MA 02631
PHONE: 1-800-626-2688 or 1-800-221-1837 or 617-896-2781



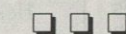
Robert Parish All-Star Basketball Camp

WHERE: New Hampshire College
Manchester, NH 03104
DATES: July 17 - July 22
July 24 - July 29
COST: Resident - \$240.00
Day Camper - \$160.00
INFO: Stan Spirou
99 Ward Street
Manchester, NH 03104
PHONE: 603-645-9604 ext. 2017



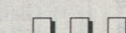
28th Annual Red Auerbach Basketball School, Inc.

WHERE: Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
DATES: July 31 - August 5
COST: \$290.00
INFO: Red Auerbach Basketball School, Inc.
P.O. Box 649
Holliston, MA 01746
PHONE: ATTN: Steve Curley, School Director
617-434-4414



All Pro Basketball School with K.C. Jones and Jerry Sichting

WHERE: Norwich University, Northfield, VT
DATES: August 7 - August 12
COST: Tuition = \$215.00
Day Camp Tuition = \$180.00
INFO: Alex Robinson, General Manager
111 Robin Hill Road
P.O. Box 122
South Chelmsford, MA 01824
PHONE: 617-256-9206

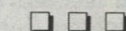


Pro Basketball Legends Camp

WHERE: New England College
Henniker, New Hampshire 03242
DATES: August 17 - August 21
COST: \$1,250.00
INFO: Dick Baker
PO Box 59
Swampscott, MA 01907
PHONE: 617-598-1038

20th Annual Don Nelson-Tom Sanders Basketball School

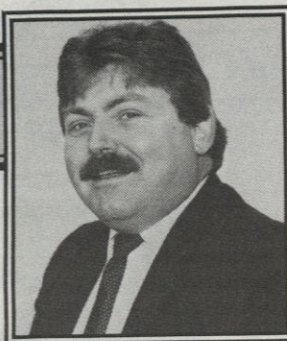
WHERE: New England College
Henniker, New Hampshire 03242
DATES: August 7 - August 13
August 14 - August 20
COST: One week overnight - \$270.00
One week day - \$190.00
One Week Extended day - \$220.00
INFO: Dick Baker
Camp Director
P.O. Box 59
Swampscott, MA 01907
PHONE: 617-598-1038
617-599-3428



16th Annual Dave Cowens Basketball School

WHERE: Regis College, Weston, MA
DATES: July 3 - July 9 (Boys & Girls 10-14 years)
July 10 - July 16 (Boys & Girls 12-18 years)
July 17 - July 23 (Boys & Girls 12-18 years)
July 24 - July 30 (Boys only, 10-14 years)
July 31 - August 6 (Boys only, 10-14 years)
Aug. 7 - Aug. 13 (Boys only, 13-18 years)
COST: Boarder = \$305.00
Commuter = \$280.00
INFO: David W. Cowens Basketball School, Inc.
433 Grove Street
Needham, MA 02192
PHONE: 617-235-0678





By Glenn Ordway

Awards Time

It's that time of year again. Time to hand out the regular season awards to the athletes and coaches who have done superlative jobs in helping their teams win. Awards are tricky, though, so many of them are based on hair-splitting analysis, which invariably leaves one open to argument. But without further ado, here are my choices for the 1987-88 regular season.

The Most Valuable Player

First of all, I hate the title of this award. I think it should be re-named the Player of the Year. The reason is that there are so many qualifications to being "Most Valuable". Most valuable to his team? Well, how can one differentiate what Magic Johnson means to the Lakers, Larry Bird means to the Celtics, or Michael Jordan to the Bulls? Since Magic and Larry have the most talent around them, then Michael Jordan must be the MVP. Without Jordan, Chicago would not finish nearly as high as, say, a Magic-less Lakers or Bird-less Celtics team. If we were to use that strict interpretation, then Michael Jordan would have to be MVP.

On the other hand, maybe I'm a little prejudiced, in that I've seen every single game that Larry has played this season, but I think he's played by far his best year as a pro. He's done even more things out there and might even be considered for Most Improved Player. Mostly because he went home to French Lick in the off-season, lost some weight, changed some of the things he was doing, and has started to leap higher and better than in the past.

You could actually take a coin and toss it on this choice between Michael Jordan and Larry Bird. I've seen Larry play all season, but from what I've seen of Jordan, it would be pretty hard not to give it to him also.

However, I still don't like the name of this award, and would feel less guilty giving it to Michael Jordan if it were called Player of the Year.

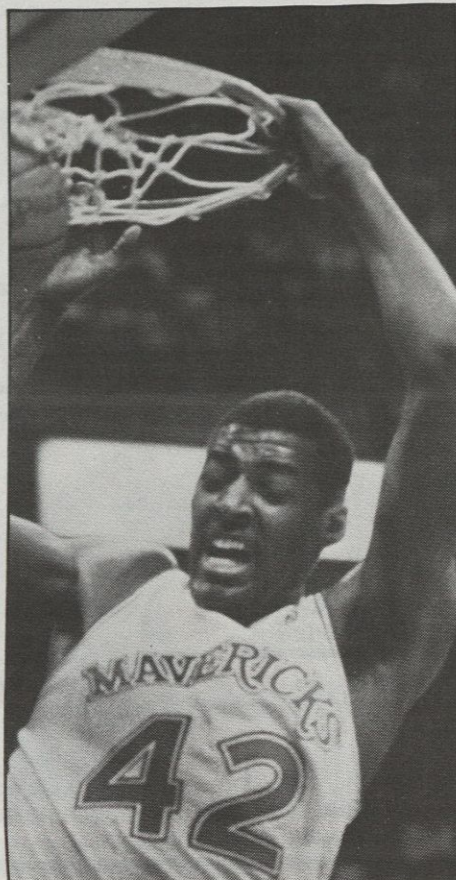
Coach of the Year

A few coaches deserve consideration here. Doug Moe brought his team all sorts of respectability, made a good deal early in the season to get Michael Adams to lead his offense. People never give this man the respect he deserves. They say his teams never play defense. Well, his defense takes place on the other end of the floor. The bottom line is which team scores more points. This was the way the game was developed by Dr. Naismith.

This is a team which plays enough defense to win games that talent would not dictate they should win.

Last year, Mike Schuler won Coach of

CALLING THE GAME



Roy Tarpley: Sixth Man

the Year, and in actuality, he probably deserves it more this year, considering the number of injuries he's been dealt. Let's face it, how many teams would be in Portland's place right now if their first two centers went down with injuries? Mike Schuler came out of this with ... not a respectable season, but a 50-win season, to top it off.

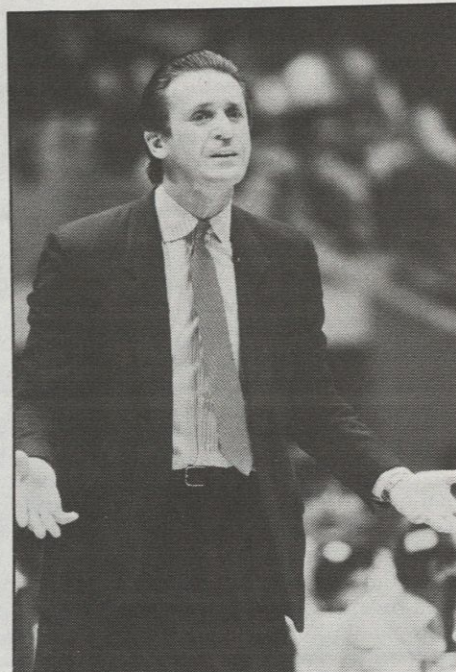
Doug Collins also deserves some mention here as well. People say, "Well, he's got Michael Jordan," and he does, but at the same time, he had to fit Michael into the line-up and keep everyone happy. Plus, he really doesn't have much to work with at the center position. The Chicago Bulls right now may be the second best team in the Eastern Conference.

My choice though, goes to Pat Riley of the Lakers, based on a set of standards I set for myself a long time ago, namely that rather than vote for a coach who gets a bad team to play well, my vote would go to a man with a great team, who keeps them great. I think this is one of the toughest things in sports, evidenced by the fact that we have gone since 1969 without a team that can repeat as champions.

It's very, very tough to keep a great ball club on top of its game. After winning the championship last year, the Lakers come back through much adversity to again finish with the best record in the NBA, 60+ wins for the fourth season in a row.

Rookie of the Year

This one is easy. The guy who got the most playing time is the runaway winner. Mark Jackson of the New York Knickerbockers. What amazes me about him is that he's playing the toughest position to make the switch to from college to pro. This kid has poise, great confidence; he seems to be the team leader and is a



Pat Riley: Coach of the Year

major reason why they're in the playoffs. He also throws the blind pass as well as any young player out there.

This award, I think history will prove,

is usually reserved for the rookies who coincidentally receive the most playing time. They can develop quickest. The question with Mark Jackson now is, how will he continue to develop?

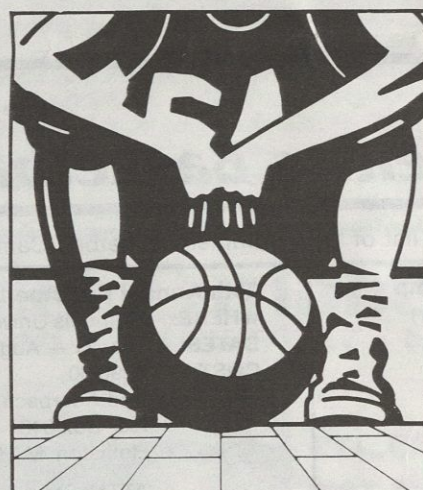
Defensive Player of the Year

Another easy choice — Michael Jordan. I said this on the air the first year Michael came into the league. What people have underestimated about Jordan is his great defensive ability. He's very gutsy, takes a lot of chances, which is why he led the league in steals last year. But his ability to recover quickly after a missed steal attempt is what is astonishing about him. He can recover and get back into the defensive flow better than anyone I've seen.

In many respects, he's similar to Larry Bird, in that they are both athletes who constantly work on their games. You always see improvement from the big three, Bird, Johnson and Jordan.

Sixth Man Award

Roy Tarpley is my choice here. Deserving consideration were Thurl Bailey, (Utah Jazz) and Jay Vincent (Nuggets), but no question here that Tarpley is the guy. Roy Tarpley is the reason that the Mavericks are still hanging around the hunt. When Tarpley comes off the bench, it not only gives them instant offense, but he really hits the boards. Tarpley is the type of player who you can see won't be a sixth man for long — he'll be starting soon.



"D.J. dribbles to the top of the key. He's fiddlin' and diddlin' to the outside!"

Time's running out. D.J. throws a wrap-around pass to YOU! Two seconds left. You shoot it. If it goes ... the Celtics are the world champions and you are the hero!

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The Tall Tale of Kevin McHale

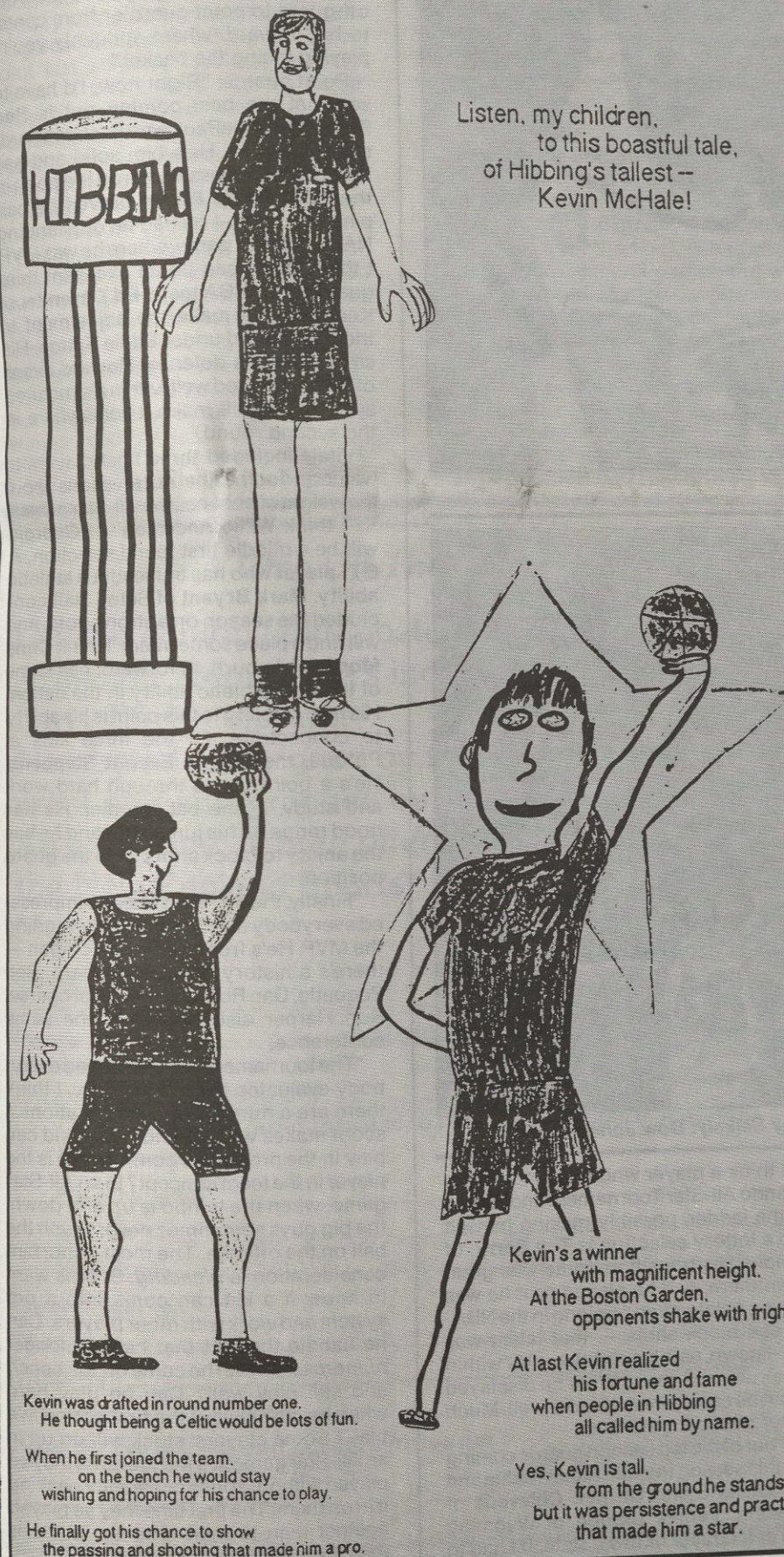
Hometown Hero

By Bob Schron

Listen my children, to this boastful tale, of Hibbing's tallest, Kevin McHale!" So opens the latest book about a Boston Celtic. The unique approach to this book is that it is written in rhyme and it is a collaborative effort from the fifth grade

of McHale's hometown elementary school in Hibbing, Minnesota, the Green-haven Elementary School. The creative writing class of Pat Mattson has taken on book-writing projects as classwork this year. Kevin's story is nine pages long and is illustrated; it is also the second book the class jointly penned. The first was about the school principal.

Some Illustrations from the Book



Listen, my children,
to this boastful tale,
of Hibbing's tallest —
Kevin McHale!

"Kevin is the most famous alumnus of the school," Ms. Mattson explained. "Although we hope, as educators, there will be many more. He was a logical story for us to work on; his family lives in the neighborhood, and we're all basically neighbors."

"The children did a lot of work on the project. They illustrated it (including a depiction of Kevin at the beginning of the book, standing next to, and looming over, the Hibbing water tower). Originally, I thought it would be a neat idea. I didn't realize how much work it would turn into."

"They read a lot of stories about Kevin and did interviews with friends and family. Kevin's in-laws invited the children into their home for chocolate cake and milk. They had fun working on it. But they *did* work," Mattson said from Hibbing.

The story is biographical in nature, portraying Kevin as a struggling player at the elementary level, but one who worked at his game to star at Hibbing High. Then he received the grand prize of all young players who play in the state of Minnesota; a scholarship to play basketball at the University of Minnesota.

The story ends on an inspiring note: Yes, Kevin is tall, from the ground he stands far, but it was persistence and practice that made him a star.

"The class is a select group from grades throughout the school," said Ms. Mattson. "The students already have a

mastery of the language and grammar. What we try to do is encourage them to use their imaginations and write in a way that's interesting to the reader. We'll have an open house in a few weeks, where the class will display their work and read aloud."

"The work was very gratifying to us. The kids worked hard and they received a lot of publicity for their efforts. One of the second graders came up to a youngster in the class and said, 'I saw your book in *The Sporting News*!' It's been encouraging to the kids."

"There were some stories we couldn't put into the book, and that may have been the hardest part. That is, what to leave out. For example, the kids found out that Kevin took his future wife and then-high school sweetheart, Lynn Spearman (now Lynn McHale) to the school senior prom, but we didn't print that. It was all part of learning how to do research and how to edit."

"But we're all very respectful of Kevin and the way he's worked to get to where he is. He made himself into an outstanding athlete and that's a great story. And through it all, he's remained a gentleman. He's an excellent model."

The fifth-graders sent a copy of the book to the Celtics star, who indeed has lent himself to important causes, such as being Chairman of the Easter Seals Drive in Boston. The students received a complimentary note from Lynn's mother, who said Kevin enjoyed the poem about his career.

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Dick Vitale Looks at Likely First Rounders Mr. Q.T. (Quality Time)

Dick Vitale has worked his way up to become one of the top three college analysts in college basketball today. The main judge of the college ranks for ESPN and ABC, Vitale began his work in the game by coaching high school basketball in New Jersey. After a series of advancements, Vitale was a successful coach at the University of Detroit before moving on to become the head coach of the Detroit Pistons.

He left there in 1979 and went on to his present work in television broadcasting. He is colorful, outspoken, confident — and with good reason — because he lives the game, and researches it endlessly. Vitale was reached at his home last week for observations on some of the players who will go in the first round in the upcoming draft.

"I think this is a draft that has about forty fine athletes in it," Vitale stated. "This isn't a draft where you have a definite number two, three, and so on. I think there will be a lot of shifting of opinion on the parts of the scouts and player personnel people, and therefore a lot of change in how the players are rated, right up until draft day."

"The only real sure guy in the draft is **Danny Manning** of Kansas. No surprise there ... I fall in with all of the rest of basketball in saying that. He's a big, great small forward, who has all of the skills necessary to be a great NBA player. What makes him ideal is the problems he presents to other teams: how do they match up with him? He's got great finesse and versatility."

Rik Smits, the center from Marist, is another player I project to go in the lottery. He has great size and he has a great offensive game. I think he has tremendous potential, and in the early picks, size is a major factor."

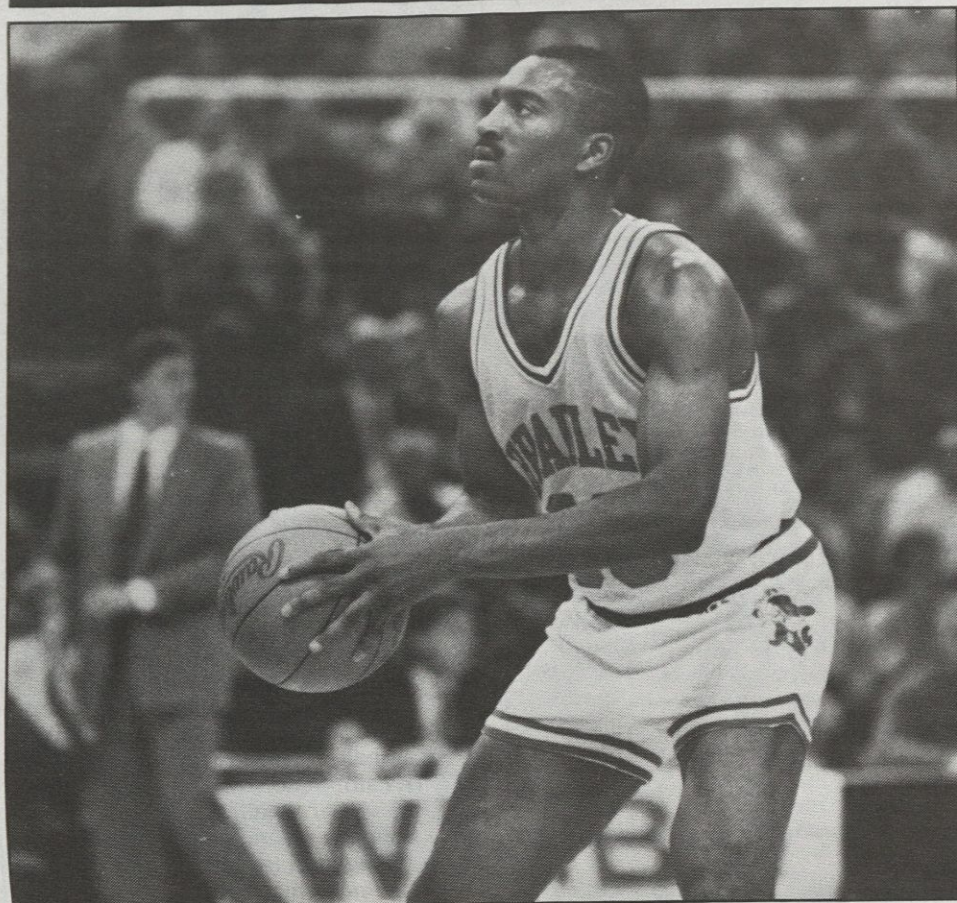
Charles Smith of Pittsburgh has to be considered a lottery pick as well. He has a great game on the baseline and, although there were problems about forward positions. He's a good inside player."

Harvey Grant of Oklahoma should be a lottery pick; he is a McAdoo-type scorer with good size. He's big physically, and that's something you don't coach. Plus he's shown finesse and the ability to understand what it takes to score inside. He can put points on the board for you, and he runs the floor very well."

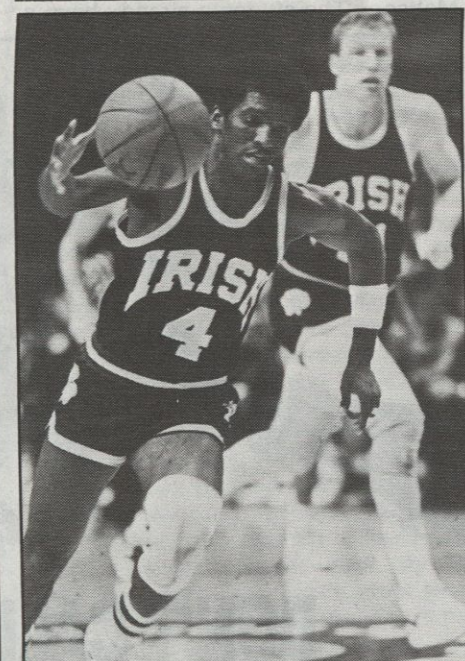
Rony Seikely of Syracuse had a Dow Jones-type of year, up and down all the way. But he has a great deal of ability. The thing is, he's a project, and because of that scouts and critics have been maybe a little bit down on him. What you have to keep firmly in mind is that Seikely has become better and better as a player. He didn't play the game at all until high school, and he's a player whose game has grown since. He's projected as a backup center."

Will Perdue. A great success story. Here's a player who's the most improved from his freshman year to his senior year. A tremendous work ethic, fitting, I guess, for a player who wasn't even recruited in high school. Perdue is a great post passer and he plays well within the team concept. Probably one of the best-coached, having played under C.M. Newton at Vandy."

Hersey Hawkins of Bradley will also be a lottery pick. He's legit; a scorer who



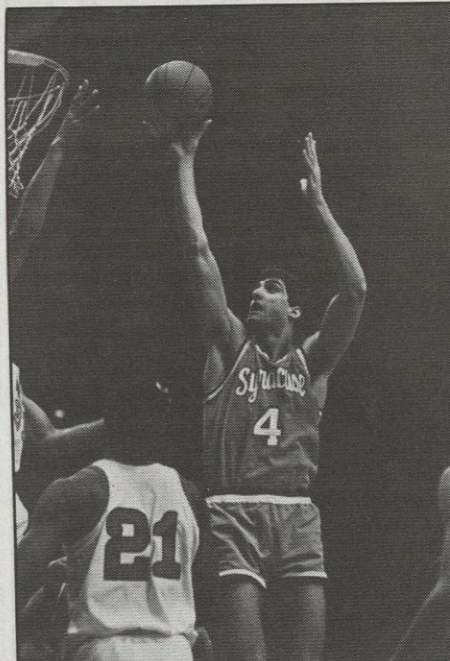
Hersey Hawkins: Possible Lottery Pick



David Rivers: Excellent 3rd Guard?

has all of the tools to be an outstanding pro at the off-guard. He's also had the advantage of having played in a pro-style offense under Stan Albeck at Bradley. He will be a fine 2nd guard in the NBA."

Gary Grant of Michigan has to rank among the best guards coming out, but what's caused questions in people's minds is his ability to play well in a tournament game. I don't think that should necessarily decide his future — after all, he can defend extremely well, handle it, and can score. Everybody weighs it differently, regarding the tournament performance. But it does make you stop and think. Why hasn't he played well when the title is on the line?"



Rony Seikely: Dow Jones Year

"I think a player who came out of the Orlando All-Star Tournament and leaped up the ladder, possibly making himself into a lottery selection is **Tim Perry**, of Temple. His transition game was great down there, and he played as if he was making a statement: 'I belong in the NBA.' He can block shots — that talent was well-known, as is his ability to play within the structured game. What he displayed is that he can score and score well. Much better than people think."

"Four of the top second guards coming out this season include **Mitch Richmond** of Kansas State, **Derrick Chievous** of Missouri, **Fennis Dembo** of Wyoming and **Jeff Grayer** of Iowa State. If I had to

make a rough ranking, this would be the order. Richmond is a solid all-around player and can probably play both the point and the two. Chievous is a machine-like scorer and he's big. Dembo is a talent, but he scares some people because he plays so wild sometimes. He's cocky, but I suspect it's similar to the Muhammad Ali approach. It's not cocky if you can back it up. Grayer is a good player.

"The characteristic common to all these players is that they are in the best position in terms of adjusting to the pros. I think the easiest change to make coming into the pros is from small forward to big guard, rather than from off-guard to point guard or from center to big forward, where suddenly you're playing facing the basket."

Point guards: "Right now, I'd have to say that the best coming out is **Rod Strickland** of DePaul, who declared hardship last week. He's big, solid and has the abilities necessary to run the point in the NBA. **David Rivers** proved he can play well here — he had an outstanding NABC All-Star game, where he was MVP. I think David can be an excellent third guard for an NBA team. **Ed Davender** of Kentucky did make the adjustment to the point guard under Eddie Sutton. His strength is his defense. **Howard Evans** of Temple played well within a structured system and will make it somewhere in the second round."

Vitale included three final players to watch and some final observations about the weight of post-season All-Star games.

"I think **Willie Anderson** of Georgia will be a middle first round selection. A 6'7" player who has tremendous athletic ability. **Mark Bryant** of Seton Hall concluded the season on a strong note, and will find a place somewhere. I think **Chris Morris** of Auburn, at forward, has some of the best athletic ability in the nation. His main liability to this point is his ability to concentrate. Of the three kids at Purdue, the best is **Everett Stephens**. He's a point guard through hard work and study, a fine ball-handler. He has good range on his jump shot and he has the ability to block shots from the guard position."

"Finally, the 6'7" **Dan Majerle** impressed everybody at Portsmouth by winning the MVP. He's from Central Michigan — there's a history of success there: Ben Poquette, Dan Roundfield and, of course, Ron Harper also played in the same conference."

"The tournaments are tricky, and everybody evaluates them differently. I think there are a number of considerations a scout makes when deciding if a kid can play in the pros. How comfortable is the player in the team concept? In an All-Star game, when the tempo is up and down, the big guys sometimes never touch the ball on the offense. The most important consideration is *blending*. Scouts want to know if a kid can come into a pro system and work with other players. Can he handle the fact that he's no longer *numero uno*? Can he come off the bench and still play well? Can he play hard when he isn't always the first option in a play? Some players' stock will go up in an All-Star game; it's the first time they've played without zones constantly packing it in on them. The first time they've played against man-to-man defense, such as they'll primarily face in the NBA."

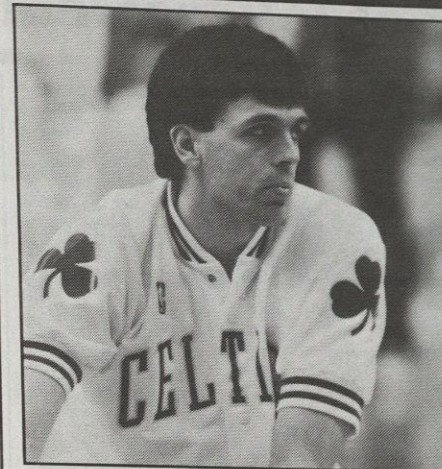
By Bob Schron

He remains one of the most dominating frontcourt players in the league, ranking first in the NBA in shooting percentage with a mark of .602. His scoring average, though slightly lower than a season ago, registers him tenth in the circuit at 22.8 ppg. Yet, for Kevin McHale, the 1987-88 season has been a year of some trial. McHale began the campaign on the Injured Reserve List, in a light walking cast, as a result of the stress fracture of the tarsal navicular bone in his right foot that he incurred during last season's playoffs. Injured and sometimes limping badly, he still averaged 24.9 ppg in the post-season.

Yet after weathering that storm, McHale fought to return to the team in December only to find his treasured mobility was slow to come back to him. "I regarded that as something of a turning point last summer," McHale said last month. "I had always had my health every summer, could play any time I wanted up until I injured my foot. When I was forced to sit and watch the team get ready for the season last October, I knew my career had changed. Never again would I take my health for granted."

The Celtics struggled this season, partly because McHale's injury forced them into a guard-oriented offense. The patient low-post offense that had served the team so vitally during the past eight years was missing — the passing game was entirely horizontal for most of the first two months. Even after McHale returned and the team began to play better through January and February, McHale's assertiveness on both ends of

Kevin McHale's Looking to Score Again Back on Track



Kevin will go out and prove it.

the floor seemed slightly below his All-Star level of play.

"I needed to find a way to get myself back on track," McHale said last week after he had torched his favorite opponent, the Detroit Pistons, for 31 points on 13 of 15 from the floor. "I had come out in the past several games and was always looking to pass the ball off instead of looking for my move inside. Tonight I was determined to become set up, established down in the blocks."

McHale's scoring instincts have been a foundation of the offense of this team, especially since Cedric Maxwell was traded in 1985 and the playing time in the low post belonged exclusively to the

6'11" Minnesota native. There's a specific mental approach characteristic of a scorer that's necessary to a winning team. He should *always* be looking to score. It's a matter of confidence. This isn't to imply McHale had had an off year in the scoring department; after being forced to miss three games in late February and early March with a strained left knee, McHale had games such as his 29-point, 10-rebound, 2-block affair against the Bulls March 20th. This was on the heels of a 24-point, 8-rebound performance against Atlanta. McHale's high scoring game came in this stretch when he tallied 33 against the Bulls, March 18th. Yet all wasn't completely smooth for the rugged forward. Apparently, he was the target of some criticism on the team's extended West Coast trip, when it was implied that he wasn't setting picks in helping-out fashion for the team. Apparently, McHale attempted to compensate over the next several weeks, turning in career-high games in assists three different times, including a performance where he registered his first career triple-double. Then against the Pistons last week, he tied that season high with 33.

When the team struggled through a disappointing two-game losing trip to Cleveland and Washington April 15-17, McHale was unable to dominate inside, a source of consternation for the team. When the team struggled in early March, including the harrowing homecourt defeat to the (18-62) New Jersey Nets,

McHale was one of the players who stepped forth to silence any creeping panic about the team. "We're slumping," he admitted. "But I honestly believe that this is the time (i.e., early March), when teams begin putting it together for the stretch drive. We're still a very good team and we'll go out and prove it."

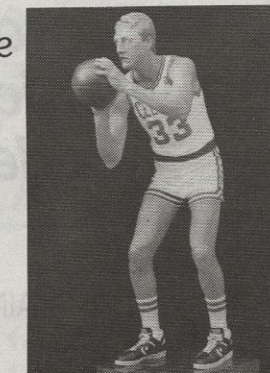
McHale was asked about an update on that early March assessment. Had the team, in fact, rallied the way he had predicted? "I think so," he asserted as he climbed into his 4x4. "The past several weeks were exactly what I had hoped for — eight straight wins. I think we made some positive strides in getting something productive out of every trip down the floor on offense. I think even though our defense hasn't always been what we would like, we've worked hard at it."

"Sometimes, I can't explain why, a team has a let-down," he commented in reference to the two road losses. "I'm not sure why we have difficulties on the road, but we had better straighten them out. I know we have this great record at the Garden, but I'm not so sure we deserve the championship if we don't start winning on the road. In order to win the title, it looks like we'll have to win away from Boston Garden, especially if the Lakers win the West (since the Lakers clinched the home court advantage for the entire playoffs with a 133-126 win at San Antonio, April 19th, ironically the same night the Celtics won the Eastern Conference)."

"It's entirely possible we'll lose a game here during the playoffs, too, to other teams in earlier rounds. You just have to go out and play your 'best' game every time out this time of the year. Regardless of where it is."

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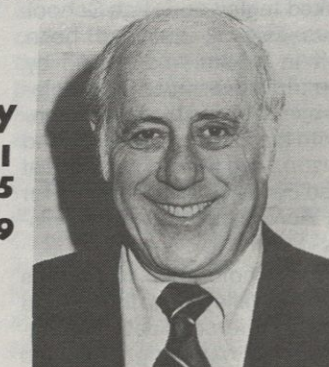
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THE BEST DAY THEY EVER HAD

Mark Acres' High School Tournament

The progress of a National Basketball Association player, from the hidden enclaves of high schools throughout the land, to colleges ranging from sizes as great as Oklahoma or small as Cleveland State, until that player finally reaches the NBA, is a completely unique experience for everyone. No two success stories are precisely the same; they're filled to the brim with triumphs and defeats, with stopping points when that player is able to look at his game and make a statement that he is confident he can make it in the NBA.

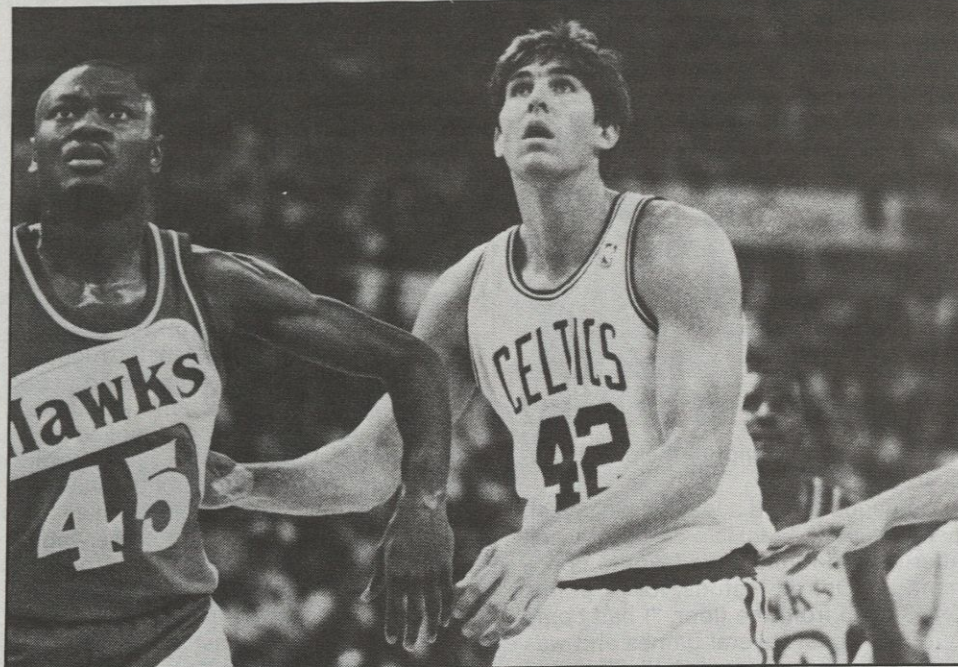
Mark Acres' best day took place, according to him, in a high school game as he was storming his way through his senior year at Palos Verdes High School in Los Angeles. His predecessor, Bill Laimbeer, had gone on to stardom at Notre Dame from Palos Verdes, and Acres was establishing a sound reputation there for himself as well. "I was receiving letters from colleges beginning in my junior year in high school," Acres said last week at Hellenic College, where the team was completing a shootaround before their game against the Chicago Bulls. "The rules state there can't be any formal recruitment for schools until you're a senior. As a senior, they (the recruiters) came en masse. I basically had my choice of where I wanted to go."

There was a sense of mission for Acres in the most memorable game of his youthful career. Palos Verdes had been headed on a collision course with nationally top-ranked Inglewood High School the previous season, but had been knocked off in a semi-final round by Mater Dei in triple overtime. That Inglewood team had been led by Jay Humphries, now with the Milwaukee Bucks and Ralph Jackson, who was a fine guard at UCLA. It had been a dream matchup for the young Acres, but the dream disappeared.

"That most memorable game was against Fountain Valley in the third round of the California Interscholastic Federation tournament. I was hungry; we had the potential to win the tournament and I wanted to play every tournament game all-out for 32 minutes each game (the length of high school games). The game was close throughout; they led 20-18 and 38-33 after the first two quarters, but I was hitting everything and I felt good about keeping us close. I had eighteen points by the half — I think I only missed two shots in the entire game. We knew at the half, however, that we were in the type of game that would be close all the way. Extremely tense."

Acres recalled that he wanted to play well because he anticipated playing in front of a close friend of his father, Dick Acres, who was coaching at Carson City High School at that time. Dick however was forced to miss this game, "I think it was the only one of mine he missed in my high school career."

The careers of Mark Acres and his dad, Dick Acres, have run interesting intertwining courses. After Mark's senior year at Palos, he considered schools such as Southern California and UCLA in Los Angeles, Iowa, Maryland, Oral



Mark Acres: The Pride of Palos Verdes

Roberts and Oregon. He would decide on Oral Roberts, joining his brother Jeff who was a forward with ORU. Acres was a productive scorer immediately; he averaged 14.6 ppg as a freshman and the team showed some real potential. Meanwhile, Dick Acres' career as a coach was also developing: Oral Roberts hired the senior Acres as coach of the team in Mark's sophomore season. Father coached son for three seasons and the peaks and valleys in Tulsa, Oklahoma reflect how the pressures become compounded as players and coaches advance up the ladder in basketball.

"Losses are tough in tournaments, regardless of what level you're at. You just have to try and look at a setback as an opportunity to look at where you may have gone wrong and make the necessary adjustments..."

... Mark Acres

"I think as you go on to play in college and in the pros, that it becomes a grind," Mark allowed. "There's administrators that you have to answer to in a way, there's increased criticism from the media. At Oral Roberts, we had a great season when I was a sophomore (Acres: 18.8 ppg and 10 rebounds). We won 21 games and went to the NCAA tournament. The following year we were ranked 22nd by *Sports Illustrated* — we had all of our starters back and our hopes were high. But the year was a struggle. We played our first ten games against top twenty teams, and after starting well, we lost by eighteen to North Carolina and we skidded to 2-8 before conference play started. I think we finished 12-12, but it

had coached us through the grade and high school levels and as collegians. He had enough." Dick Acres is now the regional Vice-President of A.L. Williams in Los Angeles.

"The ideals of playing in high school are different than the goals you end up setting for yourself as a collegiate and as a pro. I ended up playing in Europe, in foreign countries, something of a stranger. In high school, you're playing with kids you know from the playgrounds around the city. You're playing for bragging rights. But there's no (outside) pressure. It's fun."

Probably also why it's so memorable. Because the most memorable game in Acres' career turned out with Palos on the short end of a 76-73 score. Acres had 36 points and 20 rebounds and although Palos caught Fountain at the end of three quarters, 54-54, the latter pulled away in the final minute.

"We regarded that game as heartbreaking, sure. The previous year we were headed into that showdown with Inglewood and were ahead by ten going into the final quarter until we ran out of energy. Losses are tough in tournaments, regardless of what level you're at. You just have to try and look at a setback as an opportunity to look at where you may have gone wrong and make the necessary adjustments."

wasn't easy listening to the criticism of our team (I was living at home, then)."

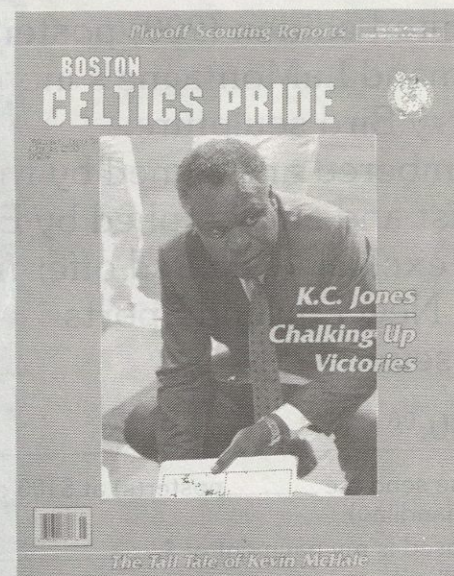
Acres' senior year, when he averaged 18.8 again, was also Dick Acres' last year as a coach. "He had taken us (Jeff and Mark) as far as he could," said Mark. "He

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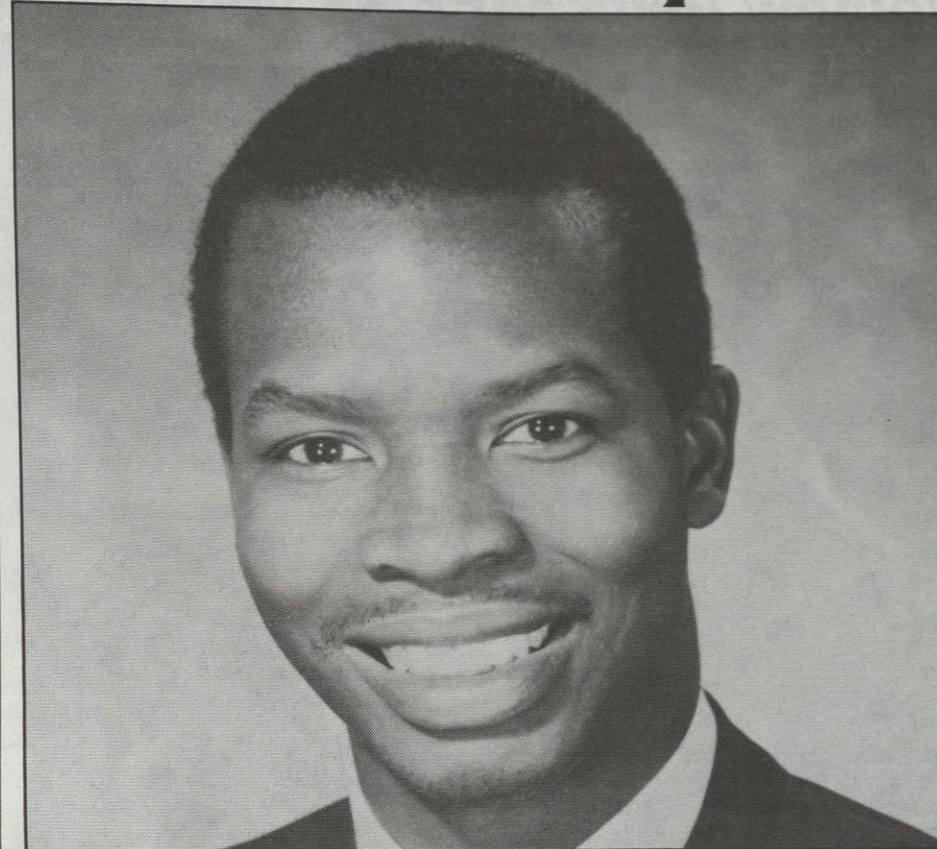
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Eric Clemons of ESPN

SportsCenter Update



Eric Clemons: In the Middle of it All

Eric Clemons has been the co-anchor of SportsCenter for the 1988 NBA season. His broadcasts handle the ever-changing news from the NBA in a clear, concise way. A Chicago native, Eric's work at WALA TV in Mobile, Alabama earned him a spot with ESPN, paving the way for his career in sports reporting. Since that time he has reported every breaking story from every team in the league. Recently he shared some time with *Celtics Pride*.

CELTICS PRIDE: Although you're an admitted Chicago fan, give us your opinion of the Celtics this year.

CLEMONS: Well, I like the Celtics a lot. With the Celtics, you have five of the gutsiest and most experienced starters in basketball. The Paxson deal will also help them negate their only real question mark in the bench. People like to point fingers at the bench and the age of the Celtics, but here they are, back in the playoffs again. A lot of people also criticize K.C. for not playing his bench enough, but I figure K.C. is smart enough to know what he has and doesn't have. He relies on his veterans playing a lot of minutes, but he's gotten a lot of results out of it. They're probably the team to beat in the East again.

CELTICS PRIDE: Your thoughts on the upcoming playoffs?

CLEMONS: In the Eastern Conference, I like the Celtics. There's a lot of teams that could bring them trouble — Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland. I don't think Atlanta can win against them, and really Detroit is probably the only team with the actual man-power to beat them, but they can't seem to win at Boston Garden. In the West, it sure would be hard to pick against the Lakers, but Denver seems poised to give them some trouble also.

CELTICS PRIDE: What will it take for teams to supplant the Celtics and Lakers?

CLEMONS: Probably a little patience is all. The Celtics and Lakers are teams who have benefitted from years of good trades and wise draft picks. They're always improving themselves. Emerging teams have to be a little patient and try to build themselves the same way, through the draft. The natural course of time will take care of the rest. Another factor that slows down contenders is that the Celtics and Lakers have two of the very best players of all time in Larry Bird

and Magic Johnson, and as long as they're playing, it will be hard for other teams to take anything away from them.

CELTICS PRIDE: Your vote for MVP?

CLEMONS: That's been a tough question all season long. We've seen the Lakers turn into a more normal team when Magic Johnson was out. This would seem to indicate a vote for him, but then, where would Philadelphia be without Barkley, or Boston without Larry Bird? If I had to vote today, before the playoffs began, I'd have to vote for Michael Jordan; he just carried the Bulls all year long. He plays a total game and has led Chicago to a 50-win season. I'm one who truly wishes they could all win it, but if you peg me down, I'd have to say Jordan.

CELTICS PRIDE: Your vote for Coach of the Year?

CLEMONS: This is another tough one. The first guy, in my mind, is Mike Schuler. Despite all the injuries, to Bowie and Vanderweghe, Mike has gotten the very most out of Duckworth, Kersey and Drexler. I would think it has been a major job for Mike to keep that team competitive this year. In the East, I'd have to say a frontrunner would be Doug Collins, who, with a team without a center or a legitimate shooting forward, has won 45-some odd games, and really has played well. Rick Pitino also deserves consideration, coaching a team that was written off at the beginning of the season. So, my top three is Schuler, Collins and Pitino, with the Coach of the Year honors going to Collins. The Bulls are definitely a surprise this year, and I think Collins has had a lot to do with that.

CELTICS PRIDE: What players this year never got the recognition they deserved from the media?

CLEMONS: There are a few. James Worthy comes to mind. Even though he's

not known for outside scoring, he's one of the quickest forwards in the league. The Lakers are on TV a lot, but even then, he doesn't seem to get the recognition he deserves. Karl Malone of the Jazz is another. He's averaging 27 points a game and pulls down his eight to ten boards a game. And he plays with another guy, John Stockton, who's only leading the league in assists, so Utah has a few unrecognized players. The NBA is like any other sport: the attention always focusses on a few teams, usually on the coasts, and the great Midwest is often ignored in terms of individual stars.

CELTICS PRIDE: Are there players out there who, contrariwise, get more recognition than they deserve?

CLEMONS: I'm not sure. I guess I really don't think that way about the game. I see a lot of positives about the NBA lately, and rarely do I think, "Wow, is that guy overrated!" The thing is that some of the players who don't necessarily look accomplished are fulfilling very important roles on their teams. Every team seems to have a few 'practice players', guys who get along with their teammates, play an incidental role during the games, but put up a mean practice squad, to keep the starters on their toes. The NBA is a small community, and non-contributing athletes are quickly rooted out.

CELTICS PRIDE: Will there be any expanded NBA coverage on ESPN next year?

CLEMONS: I don't know, with the way this company has expanded. You hear rumors all the time concerning contracts with the "Big Four," although we do have some hockey and pro football. I'm certain major league baseball and NBA basketball have been looked into. There's really an unlimited potential in cable broadcasts. I certainly think the audience is there to make it worth our while to pursue the NBA. It's a fan's sport again: every here you go everybody's talking about it.

CELTICS PRIDE: What do you think about the expansion this year?

CLEMONS: It will affect different teams in different ways. Some teams stand to lose some players in the expansion draft, and this may tend to loosen things up somewhat, particularly in the Eastern conference, where there has been some parity building lately. Generally though, I think it's good for the league to include Miami and Charlotte this year. I know if I were living there I'd be pretty excited about having a team. There certainly won't be a tremendous shift in the balance of power around the league.

CELTICS PRIDE: Who do you like in the coming NBA draft?

CLEMONS: Outside of Danny Manning, I like Mitch Richmond of Kansas State. I know he's not that tall, but I think he may turn into a really good ballplayer. Rik Smits of Marist certainly deserves a look; he may be a project, but from what I saw of him, he looks to have skills that could translate into some good play at center for somebody. We may have a sort of sleeper in Jeff Lebo, though many wonder if he'll make it in the pros. I think he may be cut from the same cloth as, say, Mark Price, about whom many people wondered also. I think Lebo could make the transition better than a lot of people think. People should also look at Tim Perry, and Howard Evans of Temple, too



CELTICS MOSTS

Playoff Mosts: Tommy Heinsohn's 37 Points as a Rookie

The year was 1957 and the times were much different. Music was gradually shifting from swing and jazz to Elvis' rock and roll. Ike was in the White House overseeing a time of domestic stability. The country was beginning to find ways to explore outer space, and in sports Red Auerbach was completing the foundation for the first Celtics championship team. This unit has been described on these pages in previous issues: the remarkable Cousy, wizard with the ball, joined forces with former baseball player Bill Sharman to give the Celtics the ideal point guard-shooting guard/defensive ace combination. Auerbach had constructed a solid front court in anticipation of Bill Russell's arrival on the team in December of that season (after the Melbourne Olympics). Jim Loscutoff, Frank Ramsey, Dr. Jack Nichols and Arnie Risen were very capable role players, as was the former Illinois Whiz Kid, Andy Phillip. Finally there was the precocious Holy Cross rookie, Tommy Heinsohn, who with an unparalleled shooting mentality and scent for the offensive boards, had won Rookie of the Year that season. The Celtics had been a type of regional team before Auerbach's arrival in 1950. Now they had united the different playing styles that characterized our pre-modern era: Cousy's and Heinsohn's New York/New Jersey influence; Russell's Californian movement on the defensive end; Ramsey's Adolph Rupp-influenced Kentucky running game. All of these, orchestrated by the competitive Auerbach.

Tommy Heinsohn holds the Celtic club record for most points scored in a single playoff game by a rookie. It is a fitting honor for Heinsohn, who has appeared and reappeared so many times in Celtics history — as player, coach, expert analyst, painter of no small distinction. Heinsohn set this record in arguably the most important game in the team's early history: Game Seven of The Finals against the St. Louis Hawks, every point needed in a memorable 125-123 double-overtime win over Bob Pettit and the St. Louis Hawks, sealing the franchise's first championship.

Heinsohn's remarkable performance won him instant stardom. He possessed



Tommy Heinsohn: The Start of Something Big

the needed poise in a time of real duress for the team that afternoon, for the veterans, who had waited years for their

golden opportunity, suffering miserable days on the floor. Cousy (who would be voted league MVP that year): 2 for 20

came through when the cracks in the smoky atmosphere of the Cooz' and Sharman's failure demanded he must.

"What a show Tommy put on," Sharman would shout afterward. "I never saw anyone put on a show like that under pressure, let alone a rookie!"

St. Louis nurtured a two point lead after the first quarter, 28-26 and maintained that edge, 53-51 at the intermission. But the Celtics running game seemed to swing the tide to the Celtics' favor after that, as the Green outscored St. Louis, 32-24 in the third period to give the home team a 83-77 lead with one quarter remaining in the season. "That game never seemed to be over," recalled Heinsohn last year in *Celtics Pride*. "There were so many twists and turns to that game. You just didn't know what to expect."

The final quarter and the two overtimes were the result of a classic confrontation. With the Hawks leading by a 103-102 margin, and with less than a minute remaining in regulation, the Hawks' Jack Coleman went in for a layup that likely would have won the game. Suddenly Russell flew at the Hawk and deflected the attempt. Moments later, the Celtics forced the overtime and then took the advantage. They led through much of the extra session after being forced to compensate for Heinsohn's absence — he fouled out with a minute left; but Coleman this time connected on a baseline jumper to send the game into a second overtime. But Boston led again. The Hawks, behind Pettit (39 points 19 rebounds), rallied to tie the game at 121 with two minutes left, but Ramsey hit a free throw to give the Celtics the lead for good. In a swift succession of memorable sequences, Russell again policed the inside, deflecting a Med Park layup attempt to set up a Ramsey jumper; a steal by veteran Slater Martin led to two free throws by Park; a free throw by Loscutoff set up a final play that still is a topic for discussion among veterans on the Garden scene. With one second left, the Hawks had time for one last inbounds play. St. Louis' player-coach, Alex Hannum, set up a play in which he would throw the ball the length of the court, hit the backboard and have Pettit try to tip in the deflection. The play would succeed — until Pettit shot the ball. The Louisiana was hurried in his offensive tap try and the ball fell off the rim. The Celtics had their first championship. The winner's share: \$1,681.81 per player.

Heinsohn finished with 37 points and he added 23 rebounds. It began a historic career for the player, one with exceptional instincts on both boards and a hunger for points. He took much kidding and sometimes more acrimonious abuse from his coach, Red Auerbach. "Red knew I could take it," mentioned Heinsohn, "so he would yell at me in order to have his anger be heard. The rest of the guys knew it, too." Heinsohn was an indispensable part of that dynasty team, the critical offensive rebounder and a genius at being able to work on the weaknesses of his opponent. And it had its origins when Heinsohn shed all shades of rookie jitters and lit up the Hawks for a Celtics record in Game Seven at the Garden in the late fifties.

"What a show Tommy put on. I never saw anyone put on a show like that under pressure, let alone a rookie..."

Bill Sharman

Classified

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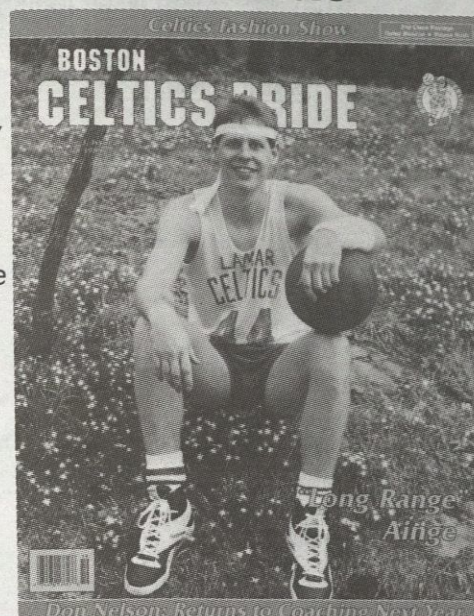
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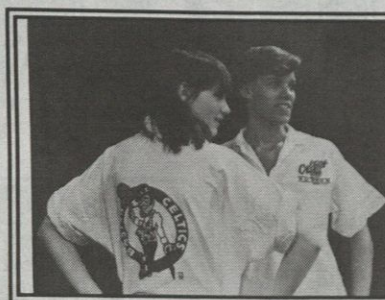
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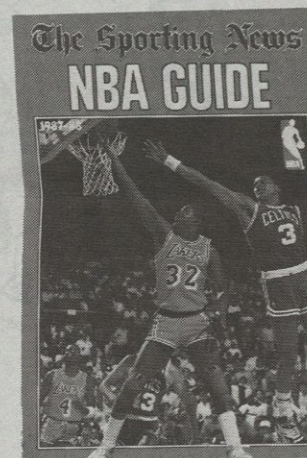
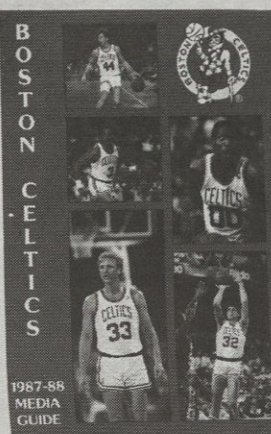


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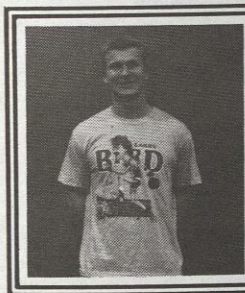
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